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JPRS 74331

9 October 1979

Near East/North Africa Report

No. 2029

Baluchestan: Political, Geographic, Historical Appraisal



FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE

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NEAR EAST/NORTH AFRICA REPORT

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BALUCHESTAN: POLITICAL, GEOGRAPHIC, HISTORICAL APPRAISAL

Tehran AYANDEGAN in Persian 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31 Jul 79,
1, 2 Aug 79

[22 Jul 79, pp 5,8]

[Text] The province of Sistan-Baluchestan, for various reasons, has been Iran's most deprived and problematic region. First, because of its remoteness and lack of centralizing facilities. Second, because of climatic and geographic conditions, this desert land requires more jobs and funds for development. Third, the culture and world outlook of its people, during the despicable history of the Shah's regime, have, time and time again, served as a pretext for aggression and contempt by egocentric and discriminatory Iranian governments.

Chronic oppression by former Iranian governments has now made the situation highly explosive in Baluchestan. And now that the Islamic Revolution provides the opportunity of liberation for Iran's oppressed ethnic groups, the Baluchis, too, wish to use that "talisman" in order to throw off the heavy burden of hundred years of oppression, and become the masters of their actions, thoughts, and work. The Baluchis wish to speak their own language, a language which, for centuries, has been considered a foreign tongue by rulers and has always been suppressed.

At present the Baluchis wish to cultivate their dry farmland. They resent their people's forced vagrancy and wanderings.

The Baluchis wish to speak, read, and write their own language, and wear their national garb. However, while the Baluchis wish to preserve their ethnic characteristics, they also wish to remain Iranian.

When, in the remote village of Khash or the sandy Sarbaz you see a miserable Baluchi coming out of his dwelling and inviting you to join him in a meal, you wonder why wealthy officials cruelly brand him a bandit, a highway robber, a savage, while he who hardly owns anything besides woven mats and is starving himself, is civilized enough to dispense hospitality.

The names of Baluchi villages, Shuregaz ["Growing in Salt Marshes"], Tallesiah ["Black Heap"], Shahresukhteh ["Burnt Town"], etc. reflect the calamities they have suffered.

In Saravan, while the only ice-making plant has been shut down for some time, the town is full of goods imported through "the port" [Chabahar] and across the border. Among the assortment of luxury items, there are electrical appliances, machine-made rugs, cowboy costumes, chic rubber shoes, eau de cologne, and perfumed soaps. This is the first point of encounter with the self-alienation of the Baluchi's culture. For example, in Chabahar, you can see a Baluchi student with a lei costume, wearing a foreign cologne, insisting that he is imitating the Persians.

Throughout Baluchestan, finding employment is rare. Except for 20 percent of its population engaged in farming, and a smaller percentage working as petty traders, storekeepers, and employees, the rest, especially lately, have been engaging, on a massive scale, in smuggling goods. Because of its pervasiveness and chronicity, smuggling in Baluchestan has come to be viewed as a regular and mostly honorable occupation. For long years and under all pressures the only thing the Baluchi has managed to preserve has been his pride.

In Baluchestan we can never observe concentrated power: various agents and elements are wielding power, namely:

The Mowlavis [dervishes] who exert religious influence among the people; the Sardars [military leaders], and Khans [tribal chiefs] who control the people politically; bandits and highway robbers who, by instilling fear in the people, extort tributes from them, or strip them naked at every mountain slope.

However, there are always disputes and scuffles within these power structures themselves. Thus, some time ago, an armed conflict burst out between 2 large tribes over a simple and commonplace matter. Peace was restored only after the intercession of Sardars.

For the Baluchi, there are no borders: despite strict restrictions imposed by governments, because of cultural, religious, and political affinities, Iranian, Pakistani, and Afghan Baluchis regularly cross over one another's borders. What is more, many Baluchis possess 3 I.D. cards: Iranian, Pakistani, and Afghan.

The worst crime of the Pahlavi regime vis-a-vis the Baluchis has been to leave them uninformed of the political developments and problems of the day: the Pahlavi regime was afraid to enlighten the Baluchis and knew full well that a Baluchi awakening would mean the end of the chronic tyranny and exploitation in that region. Keeping the Baluchis unenlightened in political matters and brainwashing them with "reverence for the Shah" by the former regime represents the problem of today's Baluchestan, a problem which can be easily

eradicated by respecting Baluchi rights and gaining their confidence. The series of articles entitled "Baluchestan: Land of Oppression" describe the features of today's Baluchestan with all the prevailing malevolence and hardships. To analyze such hardships is not to exacerbate them, although today, some interpret discussions of problems, shortcomings, and grievances as "efforts to sow dissension" and "fanning up rebellions."

We are firmly convinced that it is absolutely imperative that we urgently recognize the ills in order to forestall their snowballing into an explosion, even though some people prefer to ignore the facts and brand discussions of problems as provocations.

What today we call Iranian Baluchestan is in fact part of Greater Baluchestan, which British colonialists divided into 3 parts: the Iranian, Pakistani, and Afghan Baluchestans in order to forestall a unified and strong Baluchestan. The 2,500-year old history of Iranian Shahs is replete with references to tyranny and crimes by such rulers against the Baluchi people. The earliest historical documents recounting the despotism of aggressors and their domestic stooges against the Baluchis go back to the period of Anushirvan Sasani.

Sistan has been developed since the migration of the Saka tribe in 128 A.D. Legends refer to it as "the Land of Nimruz," where Garshasb battled with Zahak to liberate the people and conquered that territory.

Elsewhere, history recalls that Alexander the Great, during his military expedition to India, was confronted with the Baluchis and slightly wounded.

During the Arab conquest of Iran, side by side with other oppressed Iranian peoples, the Baluchis fought the giant Arab imperialism. Finally, in 250 A.H. [871 A.D.] Ya'qub Leys, with the support of the Baluchis, inflicted a heavy blow to the Abba-side rule.

The Delemyan and Ghaznavian dynasties, under pretext of "pacifying the region," subjected the Baluchis to the worst massacres.

Later, Teymur Gorgani, known as Teymur Lang [Teymur the Limping], in 800 A.H. [1421 A.D.], ravaged Baluchestan. Subsequently, the Safavids used a new pretext by invoking their Shiism, to deal a blow to the Sunnis, including the Baluchis. Sardar Gonja'elikhan dispatched troops to Baluchestan for purposes of slaughter.

During the treacherous reign of the Qajars, the kings of that dynasty once more responded to the legitimate demands of the Baluchis with pitiless slaughters and massacres. That is why the Baluchis still call every Persian and non-Baluchi a "Qajar," recalling the calamities and sorrows the Baluchis suffered under the Qajar regime.

In 1256 A.H. [1877 A.D.] Mohammad Shah Qajar ordered his artillery commander, Habibollahkhan, to overpower Aqakhan Mahalati, who, with England's support, had incited a rebellion in Baluchestan. In the course of this attack, they dastardly used the Naru'i Baluchi tribe as buffer.

During the vizierate of Amir Kabir, government forces sent Tahmaseb Mirza, governor general of Kerman, to crush the Baluchis, and pacified Baluchestan by force.

Nasreddin Shah, under pretext of subjugating Mohammad 'Alikhan Sistani, who was aspiring to power in Bampur, shelled Bampur's fort. As a result, many Baluchis lost their lives.

Finally, in 1287 A.H. [1908 A.D.] England's infamous plan led to the secession of Afghanistan and a portion of Iranian Baluchestan.

Under the constitutional monarchy, when Eastern Baluchestan (present Pakistan) and Afghanistan were within England's colonialist zone of influence, Baluchestan, intimidated by England's proteges, the Khans, became calm.

In 1307 A.H. [1928 A.D.] Brigadier-General Amanollah Jahanbani and Davarpanah were commissioned to crush the Baluchis who had rebelled.

During World War II, the Allies, by occupying Sistan-Baluchestan and paving the Kerman-Zahedan Road, took maximum advantage of that strategic area.

Under Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the feudalists and Khans had lost their privileges because of the emergence of imperialistic capitalism. They set about to become intermediaries among strugglers, brigands, and the gendarmerie. Their role in that connection was, on one hand, to subjugate the Baluchis, and, on the other hand, to connive with the government apparatus by sitting as representatives in the bogus Majles. The reactionary culture of "reverence for the Shah" among the Baluchis is a vestige of the infamous power of those Khans.

Now, the Baluchis, proud of their ethnicity and Iranian citizenship, wish to forestall the sad repetition of their history and erase the effects of centuries of tyranny from their midst.

Mowlavi 'Abdol'aziz is the most influential religious leader of Baluchi Sunnites: many of the 600,000 residents of that province are his followers. Many educated Baluchi and Sistani young people compare him with Ahmad Moftizadeh (a Kurdish leader) in terms of political flexibility.

He lives in Zahedan on an avenue named after him. Except for a few residents who came to present petitions, there appear to be no guards to protect him in his home.

In view of the lack of security along the roads between Sistani and Baluchi towns and the legion of highway robbers and plunderers at mountain slopes, before any other question, he was asked about the state of security on the roads.

Mowlavi 'Abdol'aziz replied: "The region's law and order depend on the deployment of detectives. Only they can stop all this plunder, provided they are properly empowered and assisted by the government, whether through Islamic revolutionary guards or brave guerrillas."

We asked Mowlavi 'Abdol'aziz about these plunderers. He answered:

"They are overtaken by poverty. Hunger forces them to engage in robbery and to strip travelers of valuables. Otherwise, to the best of my investigation, the possibility that these brigands have been incited by agents within that province is slim."

Enemies of the Islamic Republic

Mowlavi 'Abdol'aziz ruled out any possibility of conflict between Baluchis' Sunnites and Shiites, but pointed out that the accomplices of colonialists and opportunists supporting the Shah are enemies of the Islamic Republic.

Concerning political forces which are active in Baluchestan, Mowlavi 'Abdol'aziz named the Democratic Organization of the People of Baluchestan, whose members consist mostly of young people. As to the Organization of the People's Mojaheddin and the Organization of People's Fedayee Guerrillas, Mowlavi 'Abdol'Aziz said that apparently they have no presence in Baluchestan.

Mowlavi 'Abdol'aziz did not stress the need to establish a constituents' assembly and was convinced that the issue of "council of experts" and constituents' assembly represented a mere play on words: "The essential lies in acting and avoiding any loss to the Shiite and Sunni branches of Islam. The province of Sistan-Baluchestan will have 2 representatives in the Council of Experts, who will cooperate with the government of the Islamic Republic and are supposed to defend Baluchi ethnic and religious rights. This, however, is contravened by Article 13 of the Draft Constitution.:

"The ethnic and religious rights of Iranian Sunnites will be safeguarded only if Article 13 omits any reference to Shiites and Sunnites and merely stipulates that Iran's official religion shall be Islam, period: the Sunni branch of Islam has nearly 10 million adherents in Sistan-Baluchestan, Kordestan, Gonbad, Gorgan, Khorasan, and Iran's southern ports. Thus, making Shiism Iran's official religion will automatically make second class citizens out of these 10 million Iranians."

Among Kurdish Sunni leaders, Mowlavi 'Abdol'aziz prefers the tactics of Ahmad Moftizadeh. And here is what he said about Sheikh Ezzeddin Hoseyni:

"I believe Hoseyni to be a good man, but he is a little brusque and displays excessive zeal in his actions."

Autonomy Is Our Birthright

Mowlavi 'Abdol'aziz considers autonomy to be Sistani-Baluchi's birthright.:

"We are not secessionists. And it is not in our interests to be independent in all fields. Our goal is to see that the Baluchis make their own decisions in cultural and political fields, instead of being forced to accept decisions made in Tehran. We want to choose our own Governors General, Governors, and administrators (although not our military officials). That is what the Baluchis mean by autonomy."

In his opinion, the autonomous council chosen by the Baluchis should be fully empowered to appoint and discharge Baluchi Governors General and Governors. In the Draft Constitution the powers of such councils are vague and ambiguous. They must be made explicit.

Regarding the Revolutionary Court of Baluchestan and the purge of government offices and agencies, Mowlavi 'Abdol'aziz had special views:

"Baluchi government offices have not been purged as yet. Some of their directors must be prosecuted in the Court. The army and the gendarmerie must be purged likewise. In Baluchestan the army has remained that same army of the former regime. It has remained intact because its leadership has not been purged. In Baluchestan the Revolutionary Court has not consulted me regarding votes nor about the jurisprudence according to the Hanefite sect of Islam. I cannot approve all of that Court's votes because some convicted individuals have had their sentences reduced on the basis of their oaths and repentances. In our religious sect, criminals' oaths and repentances are inadmissible."

We Give Hope to the People

Mowlavi 'Abdol'aziz asserted he was unaware of the likelihood of treasonable intrigues by U.S. imperialist organizations. He considered a greater danger stemming from supporters of the Shah among the military.

As to the Iranian Communists, Mowlavi 'Abdol'aziz emphasized: "They are backed by no religion and are only bent on achieving their goals. They enjoy freedom of action, but they should not undermine the Islamic Republic."

Concerning government development projects in Sistan-Baluchestan, Mowlavi 'Abdol'aziz declared:

"A budget meeting the cultural and economic deprivations of our people has not been set aside. That is why many residents are engaged in smuggling.

The government must eliminate unemployment by establishing factories and construction/road-building companies. Our province is fertile and, if developed, will become self-sufficient. Baluchestan is replete with deposits of petroleum, iron, copper, and other minerals. People come to see us to demand work for making a living. In exchange, the only thing we can give them is hope: we live with hope."

About freedom of the press, Mowlavi 'Abdol'aziz pointed out that he read no newspapers. Nor did he listen to the radio or watch television. His supporters keep him posted on everyday news. However, he stressed that the press must be free to criticize the regime.

Regarding the parcelling out of farmlands, Mowlavi 'Abdol'aziz was convinced that the government must divide the lands among farmers on the basis of need because the farmer who works on a land must also be its owner. Likewise, desert land must be reclaimed by the government and distributed among the people.

Nationalization of Banks and Industries

In connection with the nationalization of banks, Mowlavi 'Abdol'aziz stated: "Charging people with interest through any channel, whether through fees or otherwise, is prohibited by Islam. Besides, charging interest is incompatible with nationalization."

With regard to the nationalization of industries, Mowlavi 'Abdol'aziz indicated: "Other industries, both small and large, must be nationalized and people must be able to share their profits. Naturally this does not mean that legitimate property ownership should be rooted out. We are not like the Communists."

Mowlavi 'Abdol'aziz said he was uninformed of developments in Khorramshahr, but pointed out:

"In view of the army's weakness in the region, agents provocateurs wish to involve us in the battle."

Government's Discrimination

In closing Mowlavi 'Abdol'aziz referred to government discriminatory policy, saying: "They are striving to promote Shiism and this issue divides Iran's Moslems. We wish the Islamic Republic to recognize both

branches of Islam. However, they insult the Prophet's disciples, such as Talheh, Zabir, and 'Ayesheh, and compare the deposed Shah with Mo'avieh [the first caliph of the Umayyad dynasty] whom the Prophet Mohammad approved and whom we revere."

Yusef Mohammad is a secondary school student in the Saravan County, Baluchestan. He is 18 and a Sunnite. He wears the Baluchi national garb and speaks Persian with a Baluchi accent.

- What's the status of education in Saravan?
- Saravan has only 1 secondary school, the Baluchi Secondary School. It has few students. Many of these students drop out before graduating and take up jobs because of the precarious situation of their families.
- What changes have been made after the Revolution in educational and cultural policies by school officials?
- Initially school officials threatened us with imprisonment if we wore Baluchi garb. They have also flooded us with pro-Shah propaganda. If they have the slightest suspicion that a Baluchi is opposed to the Shah, they would turn him over to SAVAK.
- What are your own leanings in terms of views and aspirations?
- I know that the Shah took everything from the Baluchis and plundered them. Even before the Revolution, I had been opposed to the Shah, but I did not dare show it."
- What's your family situation?
- My father passed away 2 years ago. I have a brother who went to Kuwait to seek employment. Since the start of Summer when I became unemployed, I have been working with a friend of mine who is erecting a building. I am earning 40 Tumans a day, which covers my mother's and my own expenses.
- What are your monthly expenses?
- We are frugal and thrifty: we can manage on 400-500 Tumans a month because we have no electricity, no refrigerator, and no electric fan ... We own a cow whose milk we sell every morning at 5 Tumans.
- Have you been to Tehran yet?
- No! I'd like very much to go there, but can't afford it. Thus far, except for Khash and Iranshahr and a few surrounding areas, I have been nowhere.

- What's your daily recreation and hobby in this town?
- Saravan has no recreational facilities. It only has a park. That's why many local young people are addicted to hashish which they buy at a low price. When not working, my only hobby is reading.
- What books do you read?
- Books by Jalalolahmad, Samad Behrangi, Hamid Mowmani, Darvishian, Qodsi Qazinur ...
- What did you do during the recent Revolution?
- In Saravan there was no trace of the Revolution because the former Shah regime had stripped our people of their rights. Furthermore, here, SAVAK had taken advantage of the people's weakness by inciting them to beat local Shiites and Persians (who were supporters of Khomeyni) with sticks and clubs, and drive them out.
- What role did Sunni religious leaders play during the Revolution?
- Some of the Mowlavis were good, but others were mercenaries paid by the government and SAVAK. Even in schools, on the occasions of 4 and 6 Aban [26 and 28 October] they were engaged in pro-Shah propaganda.
- What's the morale of Saravan residents after the Revolution?
- Unfortunately, as a result of the former regime's propaganda, some of our people think that now that the Shah is gone, the country will fall in ruins. Thus our town's doors and walls are scribbled with many pro-Shah slogans. Their lot has become worse than in the past. And, because they are unenlightened, they attribute this deterioration of their lot to Khomeyni.
- What do you predict for Baluchestan?
- We are trying hard to persuade that group of people to give up their hope in the Shah and attract them to the Revolution, but they consider us naive and do not pay attention to us. They have more faith in statements made by the Khans. So long as they see nothing hopeful in the new government directly improving their lot, they will not change. The government must save Baluchestan from drought, unemployment, and poverty. Otherwise, those who have benefited the Khans and highway robbers and are all armed, may instigate plots and create insurrections akin to those in Kordestan, Naqdeh, and Sanandaj.
- What are unemployed people doing, such as college grads and unemployed merchants as a result of the market slump?

Unemployed college grads have been promised work as instructors in rural schools. Other unemployed people have converged upon ports. Some of them have embarked upon smuggling, the rest are employed as porters and workers.

[23 Jul 79, p 5]

[Text] Unemployment and engaging in illegal activities, such as smuggling is the most obvious characteristic of Sistani-Baluchi towns, which strikes even the most casual visitor. Indeed agriculture is in a state of collapse and there are no industrial workshops or job-creating military bases. As a matter of fact, there is not a single production center, utilizing the energies of local residents in the entire Sistan-Baluchestan.

That province includes large deserts and unproductive lands, as well as farmlands with large crevices indicative of the absence of water and rain and of an extreme "thirst." This is not due to climatic conditions, despite appearances to the contrary: geological surveys have proved that Sistan-Baluchestan, in spite of its warm and sunny climate, is agriculturally suitable for the raising of many grains and vegetables. This was demonstrated by a protege of the defunct regime, who, having special facilities available to him, was able to establish the largest farmlands in Sistan-Baluchestan around the Hirmand River.

Smuggling, the Commonest Occupation

Because the Pahlavi regime followed U.S. policies aimed at eliminating local agriculture to make society as consumer oriented as possible, and because the Shah's notorious land reform was not implemented in Sistan-Baluchestan, destitute farmers had no choice but to abandon their lands and engage in smuggling and odd jobs to make a living.

A smaller percentage of them did not wish to engage in vagrancy and smuggling on the roads: they moved to other Iranian towns or Persian Gulf Sheikhdoms, thus becoming vagrants in another form.

Despite all the tyranny and calamities which successive governments have heaped on Sistanis-Baluchis, these tough and tenacious people have always preserved their pride. Throughout that province, the zest for life is strong among men, women, and children. This "joie de vivre" is not apparent in the Baluchi's face, which reflects historical sufferings, nor in the uneasy silence of his farms and pastures, but in his keenness and zeal which have tenaciously kept him "on his toes" for centuries.

In Zahedan parks a group of 10-12-years old boys with rumpled sacks, carry their shoe polishing paraphernalia, seeking customers and snatching "work" from one another.

Many of them accept money only in exchange for work and refuse alms. They claim that they are students whose father has always worked, and that they are content in earning 10 Tumans a day in wages.

There are many slogans scribbled on Zahedan's doors and walls, demanding jobs from the government, such as "Job, House, Freedom," "The Government Must Create Jobs with Factories and Companies," etc.

A railroad worker who claimed having 35 years' job experience and not having retired as yet, considered getting a government job as a Baluchi's greatest wish. A public bath attendant in Zahedan (who appeared not to have suffered financially from the recent Revolution, but who has opened a new public bath since the Revolution) said: "For Persians who have migrated to Baluchestan, say from Isfahan, Birjand, and Kerman, who have adequate capital for business investment, working in Baluchestan is most lucrative. However, poor Baluchis never seem to be able to amass adequate capital for business investments."

Some 5-10 percent of Sistan-Baluchestan's residents make a living as storekeepers, grocers, and dealers in foreign goods. Foreign goods are mostly imported by land from Pakistan and by sea (especially from Hongking). The number of such stores, particularly in smaller towns of the province, i.e., Iranshahr, Khash, Zabol, and Saravan, appear to be proportionately greater than their populations.

Over the past year and during the start of the Revolution, the lack of security on the roads due to the proliferation of robbers, has had a negative economic impact on the work of these retail tradesmen. Indeed, first, goods have not been shipped to the port [Chabahar] as expeditiously as in the past. Second, shipping goods from the port and border entailed the risk of highway robbers. Third, the number of travelers has been decreasing day by day.

For these reasons, goods sold in stores are aimed at local consumers. They include fabrics and food staples.

Some 70 percent of the Baluchis are dealers in smuggled goods, including weapons, beverages, narcotics, foreign made consumer and luxury items. These dealers of foreign made smuggled goods are mostly quiet and unassertive individuals who have been forced to take up such an occupation because of the scarcity of other jobs. There is no question that, if the government opens job producing centers, this segment of the population will be attracted to them because there is a strong desire among dealers of smuggled goods to give up smuggling as an occupation in order to free themselves from vagrancy, apprehension, and anxiety.

Darzadeh owns a department store of foreign goods in Iranshahr, Baluchestan. He is under 40. He says he has been a retail tradesman since his youth. In his conversations he sometimes uses English words. We found out that this was due to his socializing with Pakistani migrants and also to his short stay in Pakistan. We set about interviewing him right after he had finished praying.

- What's your religion?

- I am a Sunnite. But it doesn't make any difference: we are all Moslems. Here many Sunni men are married to Shiite wives.

- Where do you buy your goods from?

- Once a week or once every 2 weeks I drive to Chabahar to buy items which are imported into that port.

- From whom?

- From an acquaintance of mine who is a broker.

- What types of goods do you mostly buy?

- Whatever sells. I bring over 2 types of goods: those aimed at local residents and those aimed at passengers and travelers ... For example, European style clothes, toys, luxury items, tapes, binoculars, and groceries are expensive to buy and I am forced to sell them at a high price. And of course people grumble.

- Do you also sell items such as beverages, opium, and hashish?

- No, never. So long as there is an honorable occupation, a Baluchi will not take up smuggling.

- Do you pay taxes to City Hall?

- Yes, our work is legal. However, the Baluchis paid fewer taxes to the Shah than any other Iranians because they had practically no lawful business or employment. They were mostly runaways or smugglers ...

- In Baluchestan there are many plots to make the people pro-Shah. What are your own views concerning the Shah?

The Baluchis derived no benefit from the Shah. The Shah's father, Reza Shah, had driven the Baluchis nuts. Davarpanah was a military man who subjected the Baluchis to much tyranny. The Baluchis would appreciate any government which would alleviate their hunger. However, over the past 6 months, with the new government in power, the lot of the Baluchis has considerably worsened. All

activities have been halted. People think this situation will always remain unchanged. They do not realize that the Shah was no blessing.

- In your judgement, do you think Baluchestan should become autonomous or revert to its former status?

- I do not believe in autonomy. I only know that we do not wish to be wr etched as under the Shah or to let the "Qajars" (the Persians) make all the decisions regarding our fate.

- Some claim that the Baluchis are secessionists. It is not in our interests to secede because we will grow weaker and, like Bahrain, will become a U.S. and British possession.

- What's your opinion a propos of Pakistan and Afghan Baluchis?

- Pakistani Baluchis, just like Iranian Baluchis, are beset with similar problems. At present, swarms of Pakistani and Afghan Baluchis work here. We despise the Russians and Mohammad Taraki for killing Afghan Baluchis. We feel likewise about Zia'olhaq. He, too, is tyrannizing the Baluchis with much oppression. 'Ali Butto was very good. The Iranian government should not have kept silent when Butto was executed.

- What do you think of the present Islamic government?

- The government hasn't done a thing for the Baluchis as yet. If the government respects our Caliphs, provides us with roads, factories, schools, offices, and fills our empty stomachs, why shouldn't we like it? I like Ayatollah Taleqani very much.

- Do you consider it likely that Baluchestan will rebel like Kordestan?

- Not at all. The Baluchis shall not be a party to a fratricidal war. However they will do whatever the Mowlavis [religious leaders] tell them to.

- Are Communists active here?

- There are certain young people called "the Democrats" ... Some people read their leaflets.

[24 Jul 79, p 5]

[Text] Inside black tents which are proliferating in the lap of deserts and the middle of mountains, we can see only women, children, and the elderly. Men and young people, because of their smuggling activities, are rarely seen in their homes, with their children and wives: instead, they live a life fraught with danger and hardships away from their homes. Many of them have

had accidents along perilous roads, outside towns. Still others, caught by the police, languish behind bars for years, leaving their wives and children without a breadwinner. Others have been killed by gendarmes for attempting to escape..

Some smugglers have left their wives and children and moved to the desert, living in tents. They stated: "If the government wishes to halt our smuggling activities without creating jobs for us, we shall move to other countries, such as Kuwait, Bahrain, and Pakistan."

Zahedan foresters are among employed workers of that province. They work at lowest wages from 0600 to 1500 hours. What is more, they work in a desert environment where nights are icy and days are sizzling.

These foresters' job consists in planting shrubs and oak trees at a depth of 1 meter to forestall erosion which causes the greatest damage to farmlands and living quarters of the Baluchis. In addition, foresters have to provide daily care to shrubs to keep them in good condition. Their monthly wages amount to 800 Tumans. And they enjoy no other benefits, such as housing allowance, allowance for dependents, and allowances stipulated in the employment law. With the victory of the Revolution, many of the more than 50 foresters became unemployed right on the eve of the current Iranian New Year [21 March 1979]. Instead, they had all hoped to receive their yearly bonuses.

In early Farvardin [21 March - 20 April] they staged a sit-in at the Zahedan's employment office, demanding jobs. The foresters' job experience ranged from 6 to 11 years and their starting wages had been 10 Tumans a day. They stated that a forester's minimum pay should be 40 Tumans for 8 hours of daily work.

Other workers in Sistan-Baluchestan are also dissatisfied with their work conditions and pay: workers of the Mana Construction Company and those of the Zahedan City Hall. They, too, strongly protested to the Labor Bureau, demanding an improvement of their work conditions.

Unemployed Workers

The Mana Construction Company (which appears to be government-owned, but, in fact, is a private company owned by agents of the former Iranian royal court) as lately as 6 months ago was still engaged in construction operations in Sistan-Baluchestan. However, with the start of the people's Revolution, instead of continuing its construction activities, it decided to dismiss construction workers, who were mostly Baluchis-Sistanis, and even reduced their wages from 28 to 25 Tumans a day. Upon learning this news workers protested and succeeded in having their wages raised. Nevertheless, 4 months

ago that company shut down and discharged all its workers. After several weeks of unemployment and futile search of other jobs, non-unionized workers unable to defend their rights vis-a-vis the company, assembled and presented a petition to officials in charge, asking for employment. Those officials paid 2,000 Tumans to every worker, promised to expeditiously secure other employment for them, and thus put an end to the workers' demonstration.

In Iranshahr, employed and unemployed workers staged a parade on the occasion of May Day, chose their representatives, and established a provisional Council. Subsequently, in a resolution, they demanded that companies and workshops should be run by workers and that workers' rights should be respected.

The lot of Fanuj Company construction workers in Iranshahr is similar to that of other Sistani-Baluchi workers. That is why last Ordibehesht [21 April-21 May] construction workers staged a 3-day sit-in at Iranshahr County employment office, demanding a redress of their grievances: an 8-hour workday instead of 9 1/2 hours, double pay for work performed on holidays, and the disbursement of back pay and overtime pay which the company owed them.

Through their pressures, unemployed Fanuj Company workers manage to remove from office the director of Iranshahr's employment office.

According to an analytical report in the local publication "War for the Liberation of Baluchestan's Working Class" 89 percent of all those who had migrated from Iranshahr's Espakeh district had left it for the purpose of securing employment. Of that portion, 17 percent moved to Pakistan and the Persian Gulf Sheikhdoms, 22 percent to other counties of Sistan-Baluchestan, and the remainder to other Iranian cities. Out of 41 families in the village of 'Isaabad, who consisted of small holders and 2-3 other families, all are sharecroppers. Some 7 families moved to Kenarak to find jobs. Outside the Gomshad-e Zahi tribe, the period of work was 1 month and a maximum of 6 months. A worker's minimum daily pay was 50 Rials and the maximum was 420 Rials, because 46 percent of those working outside the tribe received a daily pay of 150 Rials.

A Guard for Disbanded Companies

Between Iranshahr County and Bampur there are several construction companies. Most have shut down. The guard of one such company, Makran, who, in the past, had worked for the Sangin Construction Company, said: "The Sangin Company had 4,000 workers and built homes for military personnel in Baluchestan. It paid its workers 30 Tumans a day which, compared to the wages of specialists and engineers was insignificant. Workers had no insurance coverage. With the closing of that company, right on the eve of the Iranian

New Year, 4,000 workers lost their jobs. All of them became vagrants and disappeared. As for me, I came here to work as a guard."

Furthermore, the Sangin Construction Company, despite its potential importance in attracting local unemployed workers and carrying out construction work for the benefit of the Sistani-Baluchi people, has now closed down and employs only a few guards. One of those guards spoke about that company's modus operandi:

"Prior to the Revolution's victory, the company's president, Engineer Raski, had fled because of his embezzlements. Other company officers, because of lack of security in the area, could not continue working in the company."

That guard stressed that, despite 4 years of experience, he was earning only 35 Tumans in wages and receiving no benefits whatsoever. Apparently that company might resume its work in the future. That is why the company had hired a guard.

His family are living in a "lok" [a cave-like slum] and are most unhappy about his wages.

The Sinus Company is among other centers where many Baluchis had been employed. It shut down last year in early Esfand [20 February-20 March 1978]. That company had been the contractor for a complex of 250 homes for government employees and had employed 200 workers who are now jobless.

The only company around Iranshahr which is still functioning is the Asal Owler Company which is building dams over the Bampur River. It employs 250 workers, most of them Baluchis, and a small percentage of residents of surrounding provinces, especially Yazd, Birjand, and Kerman. The guard was getting it off his chest:

"I have 5 years' experience in this type of work and am earning only 28 Tumans a day. In the past I had protested many a time to get a pay raise, but in vain. They would tell me: "If you don't want to, then don't work: there are thousands of workers begging us to employ them as guards!" Had I spoken out further, they would have kicked me out. Only a few Sikhs (migrants from India) who support the Sardars, earn good money here."

Only Factory Left Incomplete!

Within 10 kilometers of Iranshahr a large textile mill, the Baft-e Baluch, has been in the process of being built for the past 3 years. Although that plant is already operative and has a capacity of 3,000 workers, it has shut down and has disappointed many local unemployed workers (who had been looking forward to its becoming operative).

Apart from that plant there were several foreign companies in the area, including Austrian construction, dam-building, and road-building companies. However all of these companies had contracts detrimental to the local people and have now shut down.

In Zabol, the town's only tricot workshop shut its doors because of economic and security considerations and its workers are jobless. The only assistance provided to these workers has been an unemployment loan of 900 Tumans to married workers and 750 Tumans to single workers. At present, in Zabol, as in other towns of Sistan-Baluchestan, there are no significant factories or workshops to attract workers.

In Saravan, too, the only workers consist of a group of construction workers and sun-dried brickmakers.

The owner of the Shaygan Hotel, the only hotel in the town of Khash, Baluchestan, is 45. He was born in Khash. He wears traditional Baluchi garb and is a Sunni of the Hanafi sect. In his small and dilapidated inn which is being used to serve guests and the newly arrived, there are several plain tables and chairs and 2 Islamic posters with a Pakistani emblem. There is nothing else except the recorded loud voice of an Indian singer ...

- How long have you been an innkeeper?

- It's been a long time.

- Are you content with your work?

- No. I was happier in the past. Whoever wished to go from Chabahar to Zahedan or from Chabahar towards the border -- travelers, foreigners, engineers, soldiers -- all had to stay here overnight. Unfortunately, for some time now, roads have become so perilous in this area that nobody dares to pass through here.

- In your judgment, to what do you attribute this lack of security?

- In the past, authorities were fully capable of keeping in check these bandits and highway robbers. But now it seems as though there is no army or military personnel. Nobody bothers to enforce security. Right near our town of Khash there is a military outpost. But when, for 3 consecutive days, Khash was involved in skirmishes between 2 tribes, the military did not intervene at all. It took the Khans' intervention to have the 2 tribes reconciled.

- How are people's and your own relations with the Khans and Sardars?

- So long as the Khans prove helpful to the people, people want them.
- How helpful are the Khans?
- I have nothing to say about the current government because, frankly, I don't know what plan it has for the Baluchis. But, in the past, thanks to the influence and power of these Khans, our region was safe and secure and we could go about making a living with ease and peace of mind. But, as I told you, there is a military outpost near here. They have built or installed all possible facilities and conveniences inside the outpost: stores, baths, electricity, etc., a whole town. They have spent all that money on themselves and are now building latest model homes with air-conditioning for the military. Whereas, all around them, Baluchis are forced to steal and rob because of starvation. There are no inexpensive meals for Baluchis to buy and no hospitals for the Baluchis to be treated in.
- What's your opinion about the government of the Islamic Republic?
- We are for Islam all the way, but without any preferred status for either the Shiites or Sunnites. In Khash, our town, Shiites and Sunnites have lived side by side for years without any conflict or scuffles, because all of them have been Moslems and toilers. However, from the moment the government has changed, there has been antagonism between the Shiites and Sunnites. I am not saying the government is responsible for it, but then, it should not let some individuals sow dissension and shatter our brotherhood.
- In your view, how can one eradicate pro-Shah feelings which have poisoned some Baluchis?
- I don't blame those who scribble on doors and walls slogans such as: "Either Full Employment or the Treacherous Shah!" An unemployed and starving person can be led to express any kind of feelings because his brains are not functioning, only his stomach is functioning. But if the government provides these people with employment, a way to make a living, and saves them from misery and vagrancy, they would never utter the word "Shah" again. After all, what did the Shah provide the Baluchis with, except misery?

[25 Jul 79, p 5]

[Text] In Farvardin [21 March-20 April] some 500 unemployed workers of foreign construction companies stationed in Zahedan, as well as the workers of the province's Housing and Town-Building Administration staged a protest demanding one single thing: "Work."

In Zikshahr, a district of Chabahar, the military base has been shut. There is a date packing workshop whose construction has been left unfinished.

Kenarak, another township of Chabahar, had 4 companies: Sherkat-e Eskelah-sazi, the Arfiruz construction company, the Mahak company (air base), and the electric power plant, which collectively employed 20,000 workers. According to an unemployed worker of the Mahak company, when these 4 firms started to operate in Kenarak, Kenarak had less than 5,000 residents. Since that time, unemployed workers from other towns flooded Kenarak. Some 20,000 workers and their dependents had been attracted to these companies, a bakery, butcher shop, and hotel were built. That district boomed and was converted into a worker's township.

The traffic of Iranian and Pakistani travelers to this area led to the building of garages and restaurants. Hence, many Kenarak residents abandoned their smuggling activities and started holding regular jobs. Kenarak became one of the most thriving townlet of Baluchestan and was growing every day.

Some 20,000 unemployed in Kenarak

With the outbreak of the Revolution, the growing insecurity of the area, and the successive closings of companies, Kenarak's jobless workers started to emigrate and take up odd jobs. Of Kenarak's 8 restaurants, only 4 continue to function on a part time basis, the rest were forced to shut down because of the lack of customers. Out of the 30 local tailor shops, 20 closed down. The same is true of bakeries, grocery stores, and other places of business. The shutters of most of them are pulled down. Some storekeepers are tired and demoralized, and most listen to sad Indian music.

Because of Kenarak's geographic location and its smaller southern district bordering the Sea of 'Oman, 30 of its residents are fishermen. Due to chronic problems plaguing their work, their efforts yield very little. In the port of Chabahar and around the Hirmand River there are also fishermen who make a living out of fishing.

In Espakeh, another district of Chabahar, there is a textile mill owned by General Nader Jahanbani's sister. It used to employ local workers' wives for embroidery. It paid 10 Tumans for every meter of embroidered fabric. A Baluchi woman who used to work in that workshop (and with whom we have been able to talk through a local Baluchi) said:

"Workers' wives were unable to embroider more than 2 meters of fabrics a day."

In addition to unemployed Iranian workers, many unemployed Afghan workers and migrants have come to the Iranian Baluchestan which is calm as compared to Afghanistan. There are also some unemployed Pakistani workers.

But unemployment is not limited to illiterate Baluchis. Unemployed

college graduates have, for a long time, experienced hardships in finding jobs. They are demanding the establishment of a technical school and a teachers' college to continue their studies in their chosen fields. Many of them are willing to be employed as instructors in villages, i.e. in villages which desire sympathetic instructors for cultural and political instruction.

Villages Affected by Drought

While a few major cities in Sistan-Baluchestan possess conveniences and facilities, its villages reflect the most rudimentary forms of living and look like drought-affected areas.

The Saravan villages, many of which are located near the Pakistani border, because of this very backwardness, compare unfavorably with border Pakistani towns and villages as the latter enjoy relatively better facilities. The village of Kalegazan, the nearest to Saravan, lacks electricity. A small section of the village, inhabited by relatively well-to-do families enjoys piped water because of proximity to the town of Saravan.

The village has 1,400 residents, 10 percent of whom are farmers. There are only 3 grocery stores in the village, which meet residents' basic needs.

Whenever malaria and other heat-related diseases break out, because of lack of health facilities in the village, villagers must go to Saravan health bureau, usually on horse, mule, or donkey, or by motorcycle, using unpaved, rocky, and twisted roads. Saravan is located 3 kilometers from the village. When villagers' children complete their fifth grade of elementary school, they must attend Saravan's guidance school to continue their studies. The village's 2 elementary schools have a total of 10 instructors, most of whom are Baluchis. There are 300 students in the village, most of whom are from middle class families. Low income families send their children to work in various places.

The occupation of 70 percent of the residents consists in selling smuggled items imported from Pakistan. Except for peasants, the rest of the men have to work in neighboring locales, especially Dubai.

Trials in the village are being carried out by small Mowlavis [religious leaders] who are similar to "Akhunds" among the Shiites. From talking to the residents it was obvious that, because of unsafe conditions, most villagers had weapons at home.

Another village, Kalehjahladpa'in, is within 3 kilometers from Saravan. Because of its dry air, it has only 100 residents. There are 20 farmers in the village. Some of these are migrants workers for others. However, in general, there are few young people in the village: most are old men, women, and children. They obtain their drinking water from wells.

That water contains various salts, including gypsum. The village has a few students who go to school in the village of Kalehgazan.

The village of Jobaluchan has 1,500 residents and is located within 1/2 "farsakh" [unit of measure; 1 "farsakh" = 6 kilometers] of Saravan. A sand road connects it to Saravan. Portions of that village closest to Saravan benefit from Saravan's electricity and piped water. Gahak is that village's poor district: its residents lead a primitive and lamentable life.

There are widespread disputes among villagers over water and land. However, contrary to what has been reported, most disputes are peacefully resolved. Many residents are not used to taking baths and, because of that lack of hygiene, they suffer from a variety of diseases. Near the village there is an underground canal surrounded with a wall. Whenever necessary, residents use it as a public bath. Such underground canals are the only places where Baluchi villagers can wash themselves.

The Mowlavis in that village, like other Mowlavis in Baluchi villages, are paid by the people, up to 1,000 Tumans a month. Some of these Mowlavis perform the functions of nurse and physician, without drugs, but with prayers.

In that village, as in most Baluchi villages, there is no public transportation for commuting to the city. Villagers must use bicycles, motorcycles, and four-legged animals for transportation.

Because of the lack of health facilities, every year, hundreds of Baluchi villagers die. And people are not trying to eradicate the causes of dangerous diseases, such as typhus and malaria which kill so many Baluchis prematurely. The most which this province's health authorities have done to forestall diseases has been to distribute the malaria pesticide whose unpleasant odor has filled the village air and whose excessive use has completely whitened some homes.

In terms of animal husbandry, Jobaluchan does not fare well either, and the entire village has only 20 cows and 700 goats/sheep.

Anushirvan Nadi is a motorcycle repair worker in Kenarak, near Chabahar. For a short time, he has been operating a motorcycle repair shop. His customers are mostly Baluchis who use a variety of motorcycles because of the particular nature of local roads.

- What kind of work did you do before opening this store?
- I had been working 7 years with the Mahak company.
- What was your position in that company?

- I was in charge of electrical engines.
- How much did you earn?
- Some 40 Tumans a day.
- What was the company's line of business?
- Home building for employees as well as building an airport strip and a hangar for jets and Phantom aircraft at the Kenarak base.
- Why did you leave that company?
- The company had no longer use for me and I decided to leave. Those sons of a bitch didn't give me a penny out of the insurance and retirement funds, for which they had been regularly deducting my wages. Later I opened this store and because there were no such stores in the area, my business boomed.
- Are you now making a good living?
- At the beginning I used to earn 200 Tumans a day and bought a small yard. Then I bought a car on an installment basis. My situation was improving because traffic was heavy and I had plenty of customers. However, since the Revolution, this whole place emptied in one stroke. Companies closed down, business slumped, workers became unemployed, and the situation changed by 190 degrees ... If you now take a tour of the town, you'll see that there's not a single businessman left in Kenarak. All are using their savings. I, myself, for the past 8 months now, have had no income whatsoever. I owed 12,000 Tumans for the car. Its seller invited me to dinner. When the dinner was over, he accompanied me to my home, repossessed the car and demanded his money!
- Isn't there any place around here where you could lodge a complaint?
- In the past there were some officials who always sided with the rich. But now there's nothing. This whole area has become very depressed and unsafe. Because of unemployment I have sent my wife and children to live with my relatives in Iranshahr, and have put up my house for sale. But, under present lousy conditions who's gonna buy a house?
- What do unemployed people do to subsist?
- Some catch fish, others have gone to Dubai and Abu Dhaby to seek jobs, still others are engaged in smuggling.
- Are people also involved in farming?
- Not at all! You won't find a single fruit here. Water is salty here. They

have installed a pipeline here and brought water from a distance of 8 "farsakhs."

- What do you think about the present government?
- I don't care what the government consists of. But they must work for the people. Here people don't dare go out at night because they fear highway robbers.
- What should the role of government be in this region?
- The government must take away weapons from the Khans and the thugs, and have honest and peaceful local people maintain the safety and security of the region.
- In your opinion, what does the future hold for Baluchestan?
- All Baluchis residing in this province are not Iranian: there are also pockets of Pakistanis and Afghans. The lot of the Baluchis will improve when the Pakistani and Afghan Baluchestans are safe and secure.
- How are the Khans involved in Baluchis' life?
- Half of the Baluchis don't give a damn about the Khans. Another half, because of poverty and misery in remote villages, are forced to obey the Khans.

[27 Jul 79, p 5]

[Text] Owning a camel is a sign of wealth among villagers and that is why in this poor village there are few camel owners.

The feed of villagers' livestock consists of alfalfa and dry grass. In Winter they give them all types of unusable dates and surplus food.

It rains only 3 times a year. That water shortage has had adverse effects on the rural economy and farming. The major agricultural products are dates whose varieties ("Mozafati," "Rabi'i," "Shenshekan") yield an average of 300 kilograms a year to every farmer. This amount is not only insufficient for sale, but equally inadequate to meet all the needs of a family for 1 year. Farmers harvest dates in early Fall.

A family's daily food consists of bread and milk, bread, dates, and "felfelab" [mixture of local pepper and water, which is eaten with bread]. Rice cannot be found in villages. It is consumed only on holidays and the New Year's Eve. Meat is consumed once every 3 months.

In addition to dates, wheat, some barley, and grass are cultivated in villages. Vines and pomegranate trees are seldom seen in villages.

Bakhshan and Hushak are 2 adjoining villages with 3,000 residents, within 2 kilometers from Saravan. Unlike most Baluchi villages, they have no "Arbab" [a feudal chief, owning a farmland and employing peasants], but a Sardar [military leader] and "Hakem" [religious leader] who own livestock and have traditionally influenced Baluchi views and ideas.

To control the heat, residents have no electricity to use refrigerators, no ventilators, and no other facility. Thus they are forced to use a fabric made out of the leaves of palm trees, called "gavatchin" ("fan") to cool themselves.

Some small holders and Sardars use "badgirs" ("vents") which have been built in front of their homes, to cool off their rooms.

Davarpanah is a village named after a tyrannical military commander. It has 2,000 residents. In terms of agriculture it fares better than its adjoining villages. In addition to wheat and dates, farmers cultivate tomatoes and eggplants and even sell a portion of these on the Saravan market.

Many residents sell the milk of their livestock to town storekeepers who, in turn, use that milk to prepare dairy products and ice cream. The village is richer in manual industries. Many of the wives and daughters are skilled in weaving mats and baskets. Rug weaving is not prevalent in the village, but some women use sheep's wool to weave some garments such as stockings and hats.

Ziyarat is another village within 25 kilometers of Saravan. It has 1,000 residents. In addition to cereals and dates, its farmers cultivate citrus fruit (oranges and lemons), apples, and vegetables. Every farmer works on his plot and harvests its produce.

The village gets its water from underground canals. Its water supply is large in relation to its small population and makes possible a more thriving agriculture.

The village was named Ziyarat ("pilgrimage") because it contains the tomb of Haji Babadazagi who had been the village's religious leader. The tomb now serves as a shrine to the villagers. That shrine is surrounded with greenery and a lake. The villagers sacrifice many animals in that shrine to dedicate vows and cure ills.

Apart from that shrine there are other tombs in Baluchi villages. The most famous among them is Pirgiaban. Villagers have covered the tomb with mud and pilgrims eat some of it to cure their ills!

The village of Zaboli or Mags is located on a marshy road within 4-hour's car ride from Saravan. It has 4,500 residents and the general characteristics of all villages in Sistan-Baluchestan: water shortage, unemployment, and drought. Food staples which are sold there are minimal.

There are several types of villagers's dwellings: made of sun dried bricks, made of "luk" and temporary sheds.

The impact of the province's mass unemployment can also be felt here. Many migrants who have lost jobs in towns are now unemployed in the village.

The Mashkid River flows south of Zaboli. Because it dries up in Summer, it is practically useless to farmers and villagers.

Zaboli is within 130 kilometers from Iranshahr and within 100 kilometers from Saravan. Because of water shortage Zaboli's farmlands do not meet the needs of its few peasants: only a small amount of dates, wheat, sunflower, and corn are grown. Over 70 percent of residents, because of migrations to secure jobs, live outside the villages.

The village has 10 stores, such as groceries, hardware stores, and tailor shops. There are also a few small government offices. The village of Zaboli is a merger of 3 hamlets: Shashki, Behrabad, and Nokabad.

Of the 3 Zaboli schools, 1 is a guidance school, and the 2 others are boys' and girls' secondary schools. Students wishing to continue their studies must go to Iranshahr or Saravan.

A few of them go to Saravan's large district of Gasht. In any case, the absence of schools leading to the baccalaureate plays a major role in discouraging students from continuing their studies.

Over 3 years ago, a radiotelevision transmission station was established in Zaboli. After only a few weeks of broadcasting it was permanently disbanded. Huge funds were expended out of the government's budget to install the station. A segment of the Zaboli residents had bought television sets. When the station closed down, the villagers were left with useless television sets.

General Characteristics of Saravan Villages

Out of the 500 Saravan villages, large, easily accessible, and remote, some 120 have schools, teachers, and literacy corps. They include: Gasht, Paskuh, Bamosht, Nahook, Golpuregan, Purkont, Dahvar, Mohammadi, Espich, Kulu, Sibsuran, Dashtak, Kolehshahbaz, Kalatuk, Dazk, Kola (qal'eh), Kuruk, Shakband, Koharmola, Kohandawud, Gantuk, Koharmir, Ringja'i, Nagan, Siahn, etc."

Villages located near the Mashkid River (which originates in the Birag Mountain north of Zaboli and the Irandegan Mountains) enjoy greater development and are self-sufficient in terms of agricultural produce and livestock. Although the river has water only in Winter and Spring, villages located at a distance from that river suffer from excessive drought. A large segment of Saravan villagers belong to the "Azadi" ("Freedom") tribe whose members are the most deprived of villagers. Members of that tribe who, because of their traditional status in society, have the lowest income, are, in reality, of the same ethnic group than those who were constantly bought and sold as slaves by Sardars. Nevertheless, as a result of change in production methods from slavery (serfdom) to landownership, and the widespread involvement of Khans in animal husbandry and smuggling, this group of villagers with the lowest wages turned to service and work for the Sardars. Some of them are still working more or less as slaves without wages at the mercy of the Khans.

Past relations (semi-feudal and semi-slave-like) which existed between the Sardars and the population of many Sistani-Baluchi villages, caused the "Azadis," because of their race (their skin is darker than that of other Baluchis) to always be denigrated and ostracized by others, especially by Sardars, so that even choosing a wife and blood ties with the "Azadis" are considered unconventional and nontraditional. What to a very great extent has helped to save the Azadis from exploitation and the constraints imposed by the "Arbabs" was the attraction of some of them to centers of employment, especially local companies and workshops: that reduced to a minimum their subservience to the Sardars.

One of the scourges plaguing the villagers is the existence of indigenous usurers who, by charging exorbitant interest on loans granted to villagers, exploit them. It has been observed that some villagers, because they had been unable to repay loans, become runaways.

Recently the Baluchi Court of the Islamic Revolution arrested and prosecuted 2 local usurers, thus taking a positive step in purging these parasites from among the Baluchi people. But still worse is the seasonal scourge of grasshoppers' attacks on fields of wheat and other crops: many a time, such attacks have ruined the villagers.

Kiya is an old fisherman on the shore of the Sea of 'Oman in Chabahar. He has stretched out in the shade and stares at the sea.

He says that since childhood he has always been involved with the sea.

- Can you make a living by catching fish?

- I don't have too many expenses. I own a hut and live with my family. We fill our stomachs with fish. When we have no fish, we eat just bread.

- Tell us about your background. How come you became a fisherman?

- We were 10 families living in 10 huts. We were all fishermen. Now, out of those 10 families, only my family remains.

- How do you catch fish?

- I no longer have the stamina to catch fish. That is, it's been 10 years since I gave it up. Those times are gone ... Now I merely sit at the sea-shore. When a fisherman returns from the sea and pulls the nets from the sea, I manage to catch a few fish. Most of those fishermen have been my own apprentices.

- Do they sell you the fish or ...

- No... No! They know what their moral duty is. In the past, when I was young and able to go deep sea fishing, I, too, was helping old and incapacitated fishermen.

- Has fishing been your only regular job?

- Except that for some time when my situation was bad, I was forced to work for a company in Kenarak. I would then earn 30 Tumans a day. But when that company shut down, I returned to the sea ... I've been involved with the sea for the past 50 years.

- Is other fishermen's lot similar to yours?
- Younger ones fare better. But apart from that we are all in the same boat. Some 30-40 fishermen throw their nets in the sea every evening. In the morning they pull their nets. Most of the time the net is empty. Sometimes a few fish get stuck at the bottom of the net.
- Why do fishermen fare poorly here?
- First of all, because in Summer the sea becomes "drunk" and drives away the fish. Second, because governments have never had any sympathy for our work and have not bothered to do anything about it.
- Does your present lot differ from that in the past?
- Our lot has actually deteriorated. It seems as though Baluchestan has never been considered part of Iran: it has always been a cursed land where everything has been neglected. At least in the past, when the sea went mad and there was no fish, they would bring us dates from Tehran, they would bring barley for people's sheep, they would distribute clothing. But this year even that minimal aid has been suspended.
- What's your opinion about the situation in this region?
- Here, every robber and thug has gotten a rifle and has taken to the roads. And there's nobody to stop them ...
- How many children have you got?
- Three sons.
- What are they doing?
- They have left me to seek jobs in Dubai and its surroundings.
- Why have they gone to Dubai?
- So that we are not forced to become beggars. First one of them was selling cold drinks to travelers. But now no travelers are coming here any more. The Baluchis are not particular fond of the Persians, but when the Persians used to come to Baluchestan, business was booming.
- In your judgment how will the Baluchi problem be resolved?
- The Baluchis feel that everything must be solved with a rifle. In other words, it is this region's history that has molded such a mentality. If the

government wishes to save these Baluchis, it must first assist them so that they have enough to eat. Why shouldn't such a vast sea make 30 fishermen happy?

- What did you do during the Revolution?
- The Revolution was not for us ... I don't know.
- During these 50 years when you have been a fisherman, have you ever paid taxes to the government?
- You're kidding. Come on! It's the government that ought to have paid taxes to us!
- Have you done your military service?
- No. When I was eligible the government used to draft the Baluchis by force. What did the Baluchis need military service for? Military service to benefit whom? When they were considering employing me in a company, they demanded my draft completion card. When they realized I had not served, they gave me a job anyway.

[28 Jul 79 p 6]

[Text] Because of the villagers' indigence, little money circulates among them. Instead, like in some primitive societies, barter transactions are commonplace.

Because Saravan is located on the same altitude as the Sea of 'Oman, its climate is warm and humid. In Summer winds sometimes cover house roofs with quicksand. Under the former Shah's regime, this scourge was never wisely dealt with: often storms caused the destruction of palm plantation and fields. Such storms are particularly frequent in Zabol. The Mashkid River, although dry in Summer, becomes a tempestuous torrent during many days in Winter and early Spring and even adjoining villages suffer from the effects of this torrent.

Among local biting and rapacious animals, villagers mostly cite snakes and a type of rabid dogs, from the wolf family, which devour sheep and other livestock. To ensure the safety of sheep villagers use dogs.

Saravan's villagers, especially nowadays, have fewer gendarmerie outposts: only a few districts and villages, including Gasht, Suran, and Aspich have such outposts.

Villages are absolutely deprived of ice and cold water, which the villagers need during most seasons. Except for very few small holders who are relatively well-to-do, the rest of villagers lack petroleum-operated refrigerators and are used to drinking warm water. In some villages located close to towns, the children of Khans and small holders, who are literate, have written slogans in the Baluchi language, which are inconsistent with the legitimate aspirations of the Baluchi people, such as: "O Merciful God, Keep Our Shah!" "We, Frontiersmen, Wish Bon Voyage to the Shah!"

Such slogans are being scribbled on doors and walls of people, 95 percent of whom are completely illiterate. The educated among them are innocent of such deeds because, in general, they have all suffered under the Shah.

Few mechanized farming equipment is available in Baluchi villages. Except for a few tractors owned by small holders and yielding 10 tons of produce a year, there is no other equipment. Likewise, mechanized irrigation pumps are found only in Sistan, around the Hirmand River and the Hamon Lake, and are exclusively owned by a few influential small holders.

Baluchi peasants frown upon dry farmlands which can be made productive only with rainfall. And few peasants will pin their hopes on such farmlands for the cultivation of their produce. Hence, in every village, they have excavated 1-2 underground canals to irrigate their farmlands.

In the Kuhak's district of Saravan a dam had been built across the river, providing sufficient amounts of water for the irrigation of all peasants' farmlands. Nevertheless, the water was monopolized by a few influential individuals with ties to the former Shah's regime. As a result, 180 outlying villages which used water from the Himand River suffered drought and their residents were forced to flee. While young villagers travel elsewhere to find jobs, members of their families carry water, bucket by bucket, from wells to irrigate their small farmlands. The enormous efforts they exert are truly extraordinary, especially when wells are 12 meters deep or more. Moreover, if a well reaches salty water, the villagers' hopes are dashed.

Farming fertilizer is among other needs of Baluchi farmlands which, because of lack of water and of other basic necessities, has been practically overlooked.

The government must put an end to these deplorable conditions and earmark the largest segment of its national budget for developing and rebuilding Sistan-Baluchestan by granting long-term loans, excavating irrigation canals, and purchasing farm equipment. Indeed, with adequate facilities, all of the following have an enormous potential: Zabol for the cultivation of cereals; Bampur for corn; Nikshahr for rice, Benat and Nagur for citrus fruit; Chabahar for bananas.

New Tactics of the Khans

Out of the 2,500 Sistani-Baluchi villages, some 400 are concentrated around the counties of Iranshahr and Bampur. They share other characteristics of Baluchi villages, which we have described earlier.

Turdan, Dahmir, Sa'idabad, Qasemabad, and Chahsardu are among villages which enjoy urban facilities because of their proximity to roads. The Makran Farming Stock Corporation, by monopolizing the farmlands of these villages and employing villagers as mercenaries, has been plundering this region's produce for the past 10 years and reflects the new tactics of the Khans, bent on profits and exploitation.

It used mechanized farming equipment and very little human energy. After the victory of the Revolution, residents of these villages forcibly repossessed the farmlands they had lost. Nevertheless, because there is fear of plundering robbers and no safety in harvesting their produce, most villagers have given up farming and have migrated elsewhere to seek jobs.

Chahsardu is a village with 2,000 residents, half of whom live in temporary sheds made of straw, and the other half live in mud huts. There is a 5-grade school in the village, but there are no public baths, health or other facilities. Along the sheds there is a kind of dwelling area called

"kharkhaneh" ["thorn-house"], built by piling up desert thorns. They house the poorest residents. The per capita daily wages of these poor dwellers do not exceed 10 Tumans. Their major food consists of dates. They prepare a portion of their daily bread with the flour of dates.

The situation in Sa'idabad, a village with 1,800 residents, is similar to that of Chahsarduand Qasemabad. It obtains its drinking water from wells. A villager who has been weary of his difficult life said: "Isn't Baluchestan part of Iran? Why haven't they done a thing for us thus far? The only fruit of the Revolution has been to let a few Khans arm themselves. A few days ago they killed the son of Haji Dadkhoda (a resident) and fled. And there is nobody to redress people's grievances. Then how can they blame the Baluchis for arming themselves, becoming bandits, and taking their revenge? ..."

Chahderaz is a camping site amid other villages of Bampur, Iranshahr, and Behtangiz. The only things found there were a well and a small room built with stones along the road.

Chahderaz campers who consist of several tribes, have all moved out to the greener area around the mountains, with their camels and herds, because this spot was completely without water and grass. Chahderaz is now deserted, but in Winter the nomads will return there.

The Chahderaz tribes form a town of 7,000 people who are deprived of any cultural, economic, and health facilities.

Next to Chahderaz, there is the village of 'Isaabad, called after 'Isa Mobaraki, a famous Sardar. 'Isaabad is among the most thriving of Iranshahr's villages, where dates are easily cultivated. Wheat, corn, and rice are also cultivated. These farmlands' owners are small holders who use tractors. 'Isaabad has 2 water pumps and an elementary school.

'Isa Mobaraki lives in that village, in a private building, with his armed entourage. He has several maidservants, slaves, and wives. His relations with villagers are based on feudalism and semi-slavery. The same is true of relations between the "Arbab" and subjugated peasants: the Arbab owns water, land, and production facilities; the peasants are responsible for land tilling and cultivation. At harvest time 1/3 of the produce goes to peasants and the rest belongs to the Arbab.

Cheragh Rigi, an official of Zahedan's Bureau of Roads, is now working on the Iranshahr-Chabahar Road. He said he was born in Zahedan and that in these days of widespread unemployment he has managed with much effort to remain in the Bureau of Roads.

- What's your educational level?

- I have 4 years of college.

- What's your opinion about current political problems in Baluchestan?

- First of all the cause of all the hardships and misery of the Sistani-Baluchi people has been the Shah and all army and administrative agents of the Pahlavi regime who blindly obeyed the United States and regarded all Iranians, and especially us, the Baluchis, as animals. Second, it is the Khans and the Sardars who have become the self-appointed supervisors in all facets of Baluchi life and who prevent the Baluchis from making their own decisions for today and tomorrow. It is the Khans and the Sardars who always subjugate the Baluchis in order to take advantage of them. Even now there are irresponsible people who cast aspersions on the Baluchi people and insult Baluchi leaders. For instance, at one time the spokesman of the former Iranian government had accused the Baluchis of being secessionists. His statement was met with a general protest by the Baluchis. Some Shiite leaders talk about us as if we are not Moslems.

- What political organizations and groups do you sympathize with?

- We have here the Democratic Organization of the People of Baluchestan whose members consist mostly of young Baluchis. There is also the Moslems' Unity Party. But because most Baluchi religious leaders had not opposed the Shah during his regime and have now changed their allegiance, I lean more towards the Democratic Organization of the People of Baluchestan because it has been firm in its convictions and is unlikely to budge.

- To what do you attribute the unsafe conditions now prevailing in Baluchestan?

- This area has always been unsafe. However, when the Shah was in power, the government, the army, the Khans, and highway robbers were conniving, and covered up everything. So it appeared safe. But now that the Revolution has greatly reduced the profits of the Khans and highway robbers, they are making a display of their power so that they may, as in the past, rule over this oppressed nation. One of my colleagues at the Bureau of Roads who works on the Khash-Saravan Road, because of these unsafe conditions, has taken his wife and children inside a tent behind the mountains. He himself rides a motorcycle everyday to town and buys whatever he needs.

In this region, if a non-Baluchi wishes to travel, he must be dressed as a Baluchi. Otherwise his trip will prove tragic.

- What are the major opposing groups in Baluchestan?

- Here local reactionary elements led by the Khans are the most influential. Many Baluchi young people oppose that group and clash with them. The Khans send thieves, highway robbers and other agents provocateurs to burn the libraries and bookstores of young Baluchis. These are the 2 major antagonists here. Otherwise, there is no quarrel between the government and the Khans.

- What do you think of the Presidency?

- In selecting a President, there should be no discrimination and the issue of Shiism versus Sunnism should not be discussed. The President should be someone who is sympathetic with the plight of the deprived and much maligned Iranian people, irrespective of whether he is a Shiite or Sunnite.

- What do you think of other Iranian sunnites?

- The largest Sunni ethnic group in Iran in terms of population consists of the Kurds. The aspirations of the Baluchis are similar to those of the Kurds. The enemies of the Revolution and reactionary elements are striving to incite an internal war among various Iranian ethnic groups, just as they have done in other countries, serving the interests of the United States and the Soviet Union. But Iranian ethnic groups are not hostile towards one another: all Iranians had been united against the Shah prior to the Revolution. The Shah's regime used to dupe some of the honest but uninformed Baluchis and, with promises instead of food would incite them against other ethnic groups. Just as in Zahedan, prior to the Revolution's victory, the Shah's stooges incited some Baluchis against demonstrators.

- What are Komiteh members and Islamic guards doing here?

- The Baluchi people do not trust them because they are strangers from Tehran, Kerman, Isfahan, etc. If Komiteh members and Islamic Guards were chosen from among young Baluchis, they would have been more effective. And people would have trusted them. Why doesn't the government trust the Baluchis to assume the positions of Revolutionary Guards and Komiteh members?

[29 Jul 79, p 5]

[Text] Unemployment and hunger are threatening the 2,000 residents of Nikshahr, a township between Iranshahr and Chabahar. Many of that township's workers have become jobless because of the closing of the Kenarak's air base. And Nikshahr as a whole is slumping.

Nikshahr has 1 elementary school, a guidance school, and a health bureau.

Because of the region's unsafe conditions, Nikshahr is having a sort of local martial law after dusk: the traffic of people and means of transportation is halted and, on each roof an armed member of every family stands guard until dawn.

Qasrband is another district in Chabahar's suburbs. It has 800 residents and 14 villages. Together with these villages it has a total population of 2,000. Culturally and economically this region is particularly depressed. Its residents are engaged in animal husbandry, farming, and smuggling.

The Sardars own farmlands and farmers work on these farmlands as piece-workers.

As far as unsafe conditions are concerned, Qasrqand resembles all other locales in Baluchestan:

'Uti Rasulbakhsh, official of the Bureau to Fight Malaria of the Qasrqand Region was certain about the causes of unsafe conditions in the area: "The feudal lords took weapons from the gendarmerie and have become our people's scourge. All these highway robberies and evil are effected with their connivance. If the government took away the weapons of the feudal lords, people would gladly deliver their own weapons to the government."

Kadram, Sarush, Kamarzeh, and Nabakhsh are among the poorest villages of Qasrqand, where no city dweller has ever entered (except for officials in charge of the fight against malaria).

These villages are absolutely devoid of schools, public baths, health and other facilities. Most villagers live in sheds made of thorns and palm tree leaves/branches. They have never used industrial machinery or ideas.

Kadram residents consist of 20 families engaged in cattle raising. According to a resident, because of lack of food, Kadram residents often eat tree leaves. According to an office employee in Qasrqand: "Once they had brought a Kadram villager to town for medical treatment, When the villager noticed an automobile and a motorcycle (things he had never seen before) he thought the automobile was a live animal and the motorcycle was its baby: these villagers thought and lived like prehistoric people..."

"To Pakistan for 200 Tumans!"

Within 40 kilometers of Chabahar, along an asphalted road, there is a passenger station for travel to Pakistan, surrounded by several special stores selling foreign goods. That area is called Nowbandian. Travelers to Pakistan board special jeeps stationed in line without any need to secure passports.

The chauffeurs of jeeps shout with a Pakistani accent: "To Pakistan for 200 Tumans! To Pakistan for 200 Tumans!"

The Baluchis travel to and from Pakistan via Nowbandian. A Baluchi commented on that travel and its restrictions, saying: "There is no border; gendarmes do not dare stop us: they are aware we are all armed."

Regarding the reason for his trip to Pakistan, the same Baluchi stated:

"Half of my life is over there. I carry 2 identity cards, an Iranian and a Pakistani." A jeep chauffeur who was Pakistani commented on his living conditions in broken Farsi: "Today times no good!" and on President Ziaolhaq: "Ziaolhaq is not a good president. 'Ali Butto was good."

Dashtyari, located north-east from Chabahar, is another remote spot in Baluchestan. It has 40,000 residents and completely lacks any facilities. All of these districts lack water and residents rely on rain water accumulated in ditches as marshes and swamps. All domestic animals, such as dogs, donkeys, and sheep, consume that same water.

Generally residents are unaware of current issues prevailing in Iran and the political situation of the day, and are uninformed about the role of the recent Revolution. Many of them said: "Was there really a Revolution? What do you mean exactly!"

As pointed out earlier, the former Shah's land reforms had not been implemented in Baluchestan. However, with the collapse of agriculture, feudal relations in terms of land ownership gave way to feudal relations in terms of ownership of individual by individual. In the past, during the harvest season of dates, the Sardars would fill the mouths of their serfs with water to forestall their eating dates while gathering them! This practice is still prevalent in Baluchestan in various forms, even in Espakeh which, in terms of agriculture, is the best region in Baluchestan, and where landlord/farmers relations are more progressive. Indeed, in that district, 2/3 of the residents own farmlands, 1/2 are feudal, and the rest work for feudal lords, enjoying more humane relations than in other sections of Sistan-Baluchestan.

Farmers claimed: "Generally the former Shah's land reforms led to the collapse of agriculture. Agriculture fared better prior to the land reforms."

In the Lashar region near Iranshahr there are villages (such as Kuch and Hamadan) which stretch along a caravan road until the heart of twisted, waterless, and grassless mountains. Villagers lack the most basic facilities, even washrooms. Because local water contains mineral salts, residents contract renal calculus [kidney stone].

Near the same villages, there is a small village whose name may have been dropped from Iran's map. Its residents, who did not exceed 100, have migrated from their village in toto and abandoned their farmlands.

An old Baluchi man has been living 20 years in a grotto.

Within 5 kilometers of the town of Saravan, in the Davarpanah village, after crossing a difficult and scorching desert, 2 old men are living inside 2 different grottoes.

Local residents call them dervishes. These "dervishes" stopped relating to people and events around them years ago. We asked one of them: "Why have you abandoned people and are living in this remote and lonesome spot?" He answered: "I have lived 40 years with people. I experienced nothing but troubles and oppression." We inquired about his wife and children. He said: "I hate all women!"

A local man who says he has known the old man for years added: "He only has a sister, Khatun, who is living in the Golpuregan village. The brother and sister have been at odds and have not seen each other for 20 years."

The old man told us he had been living 20 years in that grotto and that local residents were bringing him food.

In his grotto there were fetid smells of rotten items. The grotto looked more like a gutter than a human dwelling place. When asked about the odors, the old man feigned ignorance: it was obvious he was used to it. But the man who said he knew the recluse stated: "The solitary dweller has had an extraordinarily colorful, and perilous life, and at one point became blind. Then a Zahedan doctor, decided to treat his eyes instead of making a pilgrimage to Mecca. He tells strange stories about his past, periodically repeating that he had fought wars for 40 years as a sergeant in the German, British, and Indian armies ...!"

The old man was in no mood to elaborate on his past. Inside the grotto we only saw a worn-out quilt, 2-3 old stewpans and utensils, and a few other items.

The old man had no knowledge about developments in Iran, nor about anything around him. He said: "I only think about death."

[30 Jul 79, p 5]

[Text] To irrigate their farms, Baluchi peasants use a unit of measure called "tas." Generally, within 24 hours, a farmer is authorized to use 2 tas of water.

A tas is measured as follows: take 2 deep containers, a small and a large one. Pour water in the large one and place the small container which has a hole in the bottom over the large container which is filled with water so that water flows from the hole into the small container. When the small container is filled, the time of 1 tas of water has elapsed. These 2 containers serve as yardsticks to measure time for the Baluchis.

Simultaneously with the filling of the small container, water flows to the farm of the peasant involved. The length of time elapsed is usually 20 minutes.

Effects of Suffering, Joy, and Expectations ...

Although Baluchi villages, because of economic and political calamities, have been collapsing more and more every day, the lively Baluchi people has always preserved its indigenous culture, customs, and folklore, and have transmitted these to the next generation as an eternal heritage. Those customs and traditions reflect the effects of suffering, joy, expectation, and moral/human characteristics of the Baluchis, although their general traits are the product of the tribal system which resembles that of their neighbors.

Here are some Baluchi customs:

If a child is born in a Baluchi town or village, the father announces the news to friends and acquaintances, saying to each: "Rejoice, Gholamuki was born," to which friends reply: "May the Lord make him happy!"

Subsequently there is an evening gathering where family members and friends collectively select a name for the infant. For 6 consecutive evenings friends come to visit the newborn's family.

Relations between girls and boys between families are limited. However adults select girls and boys while they are still children to be married when they grow up. Such a predisposed fate for children which originates in feudal relations in Baluchistan has adverse effects on children. For example if a girl is asked why she is not attending school she might reply: "My husband does not permit me to."

A Baluchi wedding ceremony consists of the following: 3 nights ahead of time friends are notified of the wedding.

The second night involves the ritual of dyeing the bride with henna, for which she is taken to a brook for bathing.

The third night is the wedding party. The next day people come to visit the bride and bridegroom, presenting them with "litoki" [gifts].

The Suran Holiday or the Suran Circumcision Celebration involves a special ceremony, performed by relatively well-to-do families.

A week in advance musicians are invited and, for 6 full days, they dance and celebrate. During that time, close relatives and friends are entertained by the child's family. If a family has several boys, it throws a single party for all its boys in order to save on expenses. On the sixth day they cover the faces and heads of children, place them on camels, and take them for a tour. Musicians around the camels, men and boys in front and women and girls in the back cry for joy, mill and clap hands. After the children are washed in a river and purified, they are placed in mortar (This is aimed at having these children produce boys when they marry). On the seventh morning a circumcision specialist performs the minor surgery.

The form of the mourning ceremony reflects class status and discrimination in Sistan-Baluchestan: Khans are buried with their beds, are mourned and lamented. And, on the following evening, guests are given halvas and rice. However, when the deceased happened to be a poor person, he is purely and simply buried, without any mourning ceremony.

As customary among the Sunnis, on the anniversaries of the martyrdoms of their caliphs and imams, the Baluchis are not mournful and do not recite any mournful songs. They only mention the good deeds and greatness of such deceased.

Political Organizations Active in Baluchestan

The proliferation of Khans and highway robbers in Baluchestan has created many unsafe and seditious conditions. These seditions are aimed at making the people distrustful of activities by progressive Islamic and democratic forces supported by the people.

The Baluchi Cultural and Political Society [BCPS], affiliated with the Democratic Organization of the People of Baluchestan, has converted the former SAVAK building in the administrative center of the province into a Baluchi House. Thanks to the support of young Baluchis, BCPS has exposed many plots instigated by the Khans and fleeing agents of the former regime, especially SAVAK agents. And in this regard it has held meetings and demonstrations.

In its declarations, BCPS has accused the Council of Experts to protect the interests of capitalists and the influential. And it considers its

duty to attract and organize Baluchi toiling masses and engage in propaganda, and distribution of literature. Because it is convinced that through such efforts it can offset Baluchis' relative political backwardness as compared to other sections of Iran.

BCPS has outlined its program on page 24 of its publication, MAKARAN, as follows:

"At present all decisions pertaining to Sistan-Baluchestan are made in Tehran and communicated to their stooges whom they have appointed themselves...

Tehran-based bosses appoint and dismiss, imprison and set free. On the whole, the Baluchis are not permitted to have any say. That is why the Baluchis must struggle to establish local and regional councils for decision-making concerning Baluchestan ...

... The Baluchis must themselves make decisions concerning Baluchestan's mineral resources (uranium, etc.), natural resources (water, land) or about forestalling its towns from becoming military bases for imperialism.

Likewise, the Baluchis must themselves choose their administrative officials (governors general, governors, etc) and, when necessary, replace them.

The Baluchis believe in freedom of speech and the press.

The Baluchis are forced to operate all business -- government offices and even schools -- in the Persian language, instead of their native tongue, the Baluchi language. The Baluchi language is not being taught in any school. No publication is printed in the Baluchi language ... This state of affairs has caused the gradual disappearance of the Baluchi language and its replacement by Farsi."

BCPS emphasizes that "all traditions of Baluchi tribes and their culture have been obliterated and that the Baluchis are prohibited from wearing their national garb in official places."

A propos of freedom of religion, BCPS points out:

"All Baluchis are Sunnis. Although we believe there is similarity and kinship between the various branches of Islam, we condemn the imposition of ideas and views of any one of these on others ... Policies and decision-making in religious matters affecting Sistan-Baluchestan must be effected in accordance with Sunnism, the religion of the majority of Baluchis. Differences existing right now between Shiism and other religious minorities must be eliminated in Iran's future social system. In areas with a Sunni majority, official holidays, radio and television programs, and religious instruction in schools, etc. must conform to Sunnism."

As to "the right to life and happiness" BCPS declares: "The per capita income of the region does not exceed several hundred Tumans a year. Most residents are illiterate and their situation in terms of hygiene is lamentable."

In closing, the declaration stresses that:

"We are opposed to any type of secession, on the part of any group, expressed under any pretext."

Ensuring Safety Through the Khans!

In another declaration, NABARD-E BALUCH ("The Baluchi Battle"), supporting the Democratic Organization of the People of Baluchestan, has exposed the political background of some current Khans in Sistan-Baluchestan, revealing that they had been agents of the former regime, and warning that they are preparing new armed plots and treacherous activities against the Baluchis.

Some of the Khans thus implicated include:

1. Karimbakhsh Sa'idi, Chabahar representative during 4 sessions of the Majles;
2. 'Isakhan Mobaraki, Iranshahr representative during several sessions of the Majles;
3. Mohammadkhan Mirlashari, Baluchi representative at the recent session of the Majles;
4. Bahman Barkazahi, Baluchi representative at the recent session of the Majles;
5. Mirmowladad Mirja'i, Chabahar representative in the Majles;
6. Mowladad Sardarzahi.

That declaration further warns:

"Every plotting stooge of the Khans has been given 60 to 100 weapons by military agents of the government of the Iranian Islamic Republic and Major Zia'i, commander of Iranshahr's gendarmerie regiment, ostensibly for the purpose of ensuring security by the Khans."

[31 Jul 79, p 9]

[Text] The Democratic Organization of the People of Baluchestan has stated the following in a communique released on the occasion of the visit to Baluchestan of Ayatollah Khameneyi, representing the Government:

"Instead of getting in touch with the Baluchi people, Ayatollah Khameneyi established contact with local reactionary elements, including Haj Karim-Bakhsh Sa'idi tribe."

The Organization has further claimed, that according to an agreement, he has been given 800 pieces of arms, to enable him to preserve the security of the area, but "instead of preserving security, Karim-Bakhsh Sa'idi usurped the district of Karambid, and was even planning to carry away the equipment of Kanarak base, which was prevented by the people."

This Organization has claimed also, that Seyyed Ahmad Khordegir, the notorious torturer of SAVAK, is enjoying the protection of certain 'khan's of the area. In the meantime, attacks have also been made on Mowlavi Qamareddin, leader of the Mowlavi [dervishes] sect of Iranshahr, and 'Abdol-Vahed Armian, leader of the Justice-seeking Front of Baluchestan.

The Democratic Organization of the People of Baluchestan has condemned the suggestion of Danesh Naruyi, Governor General of Sistan-Baluchestan, to the effect that the former deputies of the Majles should be exempted from repaying their salaries received in the previous years. The Organization has, in a second statement, proposed that councils be formed in the schools, corporations, government and military organizations, as well as in the rural districts and cities of Baluchestan. Also, it has expressed its opposition to appointments made from "above," and all kinds of dictatorial attitudes, including censorship, have been condemned.

The Organization is of the opinion, that the properties and belongings of antirevolutionary elements and local reactionaries should be confiscated and transferred to the Revolution Council.

Struggle against all types of "secession," and opposition to anti-revolutionary and local reactionary elements, aimed at restoring the rights of the Baluchi people, are additional points brought up in that statement. Present government authorities in Baluchestan, especially Ebrahim Mobaraki, Rigi and Gomshadzehi, have also been criticized by the Organization.

The supporters of the Organization have written slogans on the city-walls of Zahedan as follows:

"The Baluchi people will continue its struggle until it attains autonomy";
"The leader of the Kurdish and Baluchi peoples is 'Ezzedin Hoseyni"; "Secessionist movement will perish, but autonomy will be victorious."

Other Activity Groups:

The Moslems' Unity Party is another active organization in Baluchestan, which has a great many supporters among the people, and especially among the "khan"s.

The party in question operates under Mowlavi 'Abdol-'Aziz, and the aim pursued by it, according to the leader of the party, is to organize the Moslems, and create unity between the Shi'ite and Sonnite sects. All of the followers of the Mowlavi [dervishes] sect resident in various cities of Baluchestan are supporters of this party, and are engaged in propagating its principles among the masses. Mowlavi Nazar-Mohammad, resident in Saravan, Mowlavi Sattar and Movlavi Yar-Mohammad in Khash, and Mowlavi Qamareddin in Iranshahr, are active supporters of this party.

Some time ago a statement was issued by this party, in which Imam Khomeyni's leadership had been praised, and, in the meantime, it contained an expression of protest against Principle 13 of the Draft Constitution. The party had demanded to eliminate the mention of the Shi'ite and Sonnite sects, especially when it came to the election of the President of the Islamic State.

The Moslems' Unity Party is opposed to Communism whatever its name, form and shape might be, and it condemns the policies adopted by the Soviets and Taraki in Afghanistan.

The branch of this party in Saravan, during a rally held on 20 June of the current year, and attended by Mowlavi Nazar Mohammad, required to stop circulating accusations directed against Sonnite leaders, in order to prevent dissension among the followers of Islam. It was also emphasized, that

the Governor General should be granted full powers by the Government, and in order to prevent poverty and deviation of the people of Baluchestan, jobs and employment should be provided for them, and efforts should be made to revive and promote agricultural activities.

The Khash Tribes also, affiliated with the Moslems' Unity Party, during their third meeting in May of the current year, held in the city of Khash, requested that Ayatollah Taleqani set up a representation in the provincial capital of Sistan and Baluchestan. Also they presented a request to the Governor General, asking him to bring into existence a committee, aimed at creating order in the area. This branch, following in the footsteps of Molavi 'Abdol-'Aziz, the leader of the party, has also requested autonomy for Baluchestan, under the leadership of Imam Khomeyni.

In addition to these two groups, there exist also a number of other organizations in the province of Sistan-Baluchestan as follows: "Da-Neshjuyan-e Mosalman-e Baluch" [Moslem Baluchi Students' Party]; "Jame'e-Ye Sistaniha" [Society of Sistanis]; "Sazeman-e Javanan-e Pishtaz-e Mojahedin-e Baluch" [Organization of Progressive "Mojahedin" of Baluchi Youths], and "Jebhe-Ye 'Adalatkhah" [Justice-seeking Front]. These groups, for the most part, exercise influence and are active in areas close to the urban districts of Zabol.

Another group, consisting of active elements operating especially in the cultural field, is the organization of "Daneshjuyan-e Pishgam-e Daneshgah-e Baluchestan" [Vanguard Students of the University of Baluchestan]. In a statement released by this group, the reactionary elements of the university have been condemned, because they have been requiring the dissolution of the university and the dismissal of the University Council. The statement goes on to say, that SAVAK elements of the university, contrary to other universities, have not yet been purged.

All of these groups, listed above, advocate the concept of autonomy within the framework of Iran, and they all condemn secessionism, and continue to wage a struggle against secessionists.

Insurgents -- real nuisance for Baluchi people:

The nuisance and insurgency of a large number of highway robbers in Baluchestan have had their deep impact on the creation of discontent and complaints among the inhabitants of Baluchestan and Sistan.

The armed group called "nar-gorazan," headed by Rasulbakhsh and 'Azam, has made life unbearable for the inhabitants of Chah-Bahar and Kanarak, by its continuous acts of seizing hostages, threats, intimidations and robberies. The population of these two cities have often asked the government to have those elements suppressed and liquidated.

Damages caused by armed groups of robbers, who are undoubtedly being backed and strengthened by a number of "khan"s and puppet elements of the U.S. imperialism, are leaving their impact through the entire area of Baluchestan and Sistan, and, as a result, most events of a mysterious nature are being ascribed to them. For example, in the last week of April of this year a gendarmerie Range Rover vehicle was attacked by a number of suspicious elements at kms 5 of Iranshahr--Chahderaz road. One soldier was killed, and 2 gendarmes were injured. The intent of the assailants was to disarm the military personnel.

During the last week of July of the current year, 4 jeeps and mountain-station vehicles, carrying 15 gunmen and a large number of club-wielding persons, headed by Shamak (Shahmorad), entered the city of Saravan, and under the guise of Islam, they began to shout: "Islam is victorious, and Communism has been annihilated." They then attacked 2 book-stores, and the city library which had recently been established by the youths of the city. The librarian was then forced to set the books on fire. At the time when Shahmak's group was within the city, its personnel were not pursued and arrested by the armed officials of the police, and the patrols hid themselves in a shop when they noticed the members of the group. Commenting on the assault, one teacher at Saravan made this remark: Shahmak is an instrument in the hands of the "khan"s and is their agent. By such moves they intend to create terror and harassment among the people, and by exploiting the religious sentiments of the inhabitants, to stage a display of power, aimed at reviving the feudal system of the "khan"s, which had recently been endangered by a number of struggling Baluchi and Sistani youths."

Shahmak is one of the notorious insurgents of the Saravan region, and is resident at the village of Bamosht. He is the man involved in the robbery of the Suran village bank in Saravan, and a number of other cases of theft and highway robberies.

According to a large number of inhabitants of the area, once he killed two people for personal matters, and the "khan"s have always used him against their opponents.

In the reign of the former regime he had undergone training at Baghdad for guerrilla warfare, and after re-entering Iran he was arrested, and became a SAVAK agent serving in Baluchestan. Since that time he has committed many crimes against local intellectuals, in accordance with directives given to him by SAVAK.

[1 Aug 79, p 5]

[Text] The rest of the Dadshah group (who had arrived from Mosaghat 2-3 years ago and had been hiding in Baluchestan mountains) consists of bandits whom the Shah's regime and several Khans had used to weed out "undesirable elements." As an example, past governments had used the Dadshah bandits to crush Rasulbakhsh and 'Azam who have been among anti-government and anti-Khan plunderers in the Dashtyari (Kahir) region.

Rasulbakhsh and 'Azam are among those who take orders from nobody and are bent on continuing their plundering operations.

Dadshah was among bandits killed on the pretext of differing with the Khans. Years ago he took an American woman as an hostage and fled to the mountains. His brother, sister, wife, and some friends accompanied him. While fleeing, the American woman was killed by a member of the Dadshah group and reportedly under Dadsha's orders. Because of that, gendarmes surrounded them. Dadshah, who trusted only Ebrahimkhan Lashari among the Khans, believed Lashari's promise and decided to surrender to gendarmes ... Subsequently Dadshah was executed.

'Isakhan Mobaraki who played a major role in that adventure, married Dadshah's widow after having kept her captive.

In Farvardin [21 March-20 April] in Iranshahr, several bandits kidnapped the child of a prominent family, demanding a ransom of 100,000 Tumans from Sheykh 'Abdolahi, Iranshahr's most famous capitalist. He was the representative for the Toyota and Benz companies and owned Iranshahr's pharmacy. The incident ended up with the intercession of a Sardar and the payment of 30,000 Tumans. In this adventure Sheykh 'Abdolahi's stores were set on fire. According to many Iranshahr residents, 'Abdolahi was an important agent of the Shah's regime. Now, because his background has been exposed, he has been put behind bars in Kerman.

Likewise, in Zabol, a teacher, 'Abas'ali Mowdi, who had been killed under mysterious circumstances, has been linked to a group of thugs affiliated with SAVAK.

Unsafe Roads

Many Baluchis who travel from town to town speak of the cruelty of highway robbers: when robbers attack they demand even the clothes people have on. Others have claimed that highway robbers would not rob victims with whom they were acquainted. But the lack of physical security in that region has led poor residents (the majority) to arm themselves with inexpensive old weapons while wealthier residents have armed themselves with more modern weapons. Hence, while traveling, the butts of their rifles are

sticking out from their cars and while praying in the desert their weapons are laid down next to themselves. The most perilous roads in Sistan-Baluchestan in terms of highway robbers attacks are the Chabahar-Iranshahr and Iranshahr-Bazman Roads. This is due to the fact that trucks full of goods use those roads. Robbers first send several motorcyclists to ascertain the nature of goods being shipped. If they find the goods desirable, they proceed to block the road with their riflemen. Throughout the recent Revolution, when Iran's security as a whole was jeopardized, because of the absence of law enforcement agents, robbers had the time of their life and had even raped in the most despicable fashion an 11-year old girl.

Recently Zabol's and Zahedan's detectives have succeeded in arresting a heavily armed robber. Some 7 other armed robbers have been seized by local detectives and turned over to the province's law enforcement agents. Those robbers are:

1. Feyz Mohammad Afruz;
2. 'Ali Shahuzi;
3. Isma'ilshahian Shabuzi
4. Dirmohammad Shahuzi;
5. Esasha;
6. Afghan;
7. Latif.

Ahuran, Major Robbers' Center

Generally highway robbers differ from smugglers in goods, narcotics, and weapons. On many occasions highway robbers engage in scuffles among themselves over the killing of smugglers.

In a small inn in Kenarak, we got acquainted with Hoseyn Aqa, a heroin smuggler, who told us he lived in Masjed Soleyman. All the people in the inn were addicts. Heroin had attracted a Kermanshah resident to this area. Another addict, Rasul Yadegari said that his brother Fahim was killed when carrying smuggled heroin and escaping from Revolutionary Guards on the Yazd-Tehran Road. He stated: "I had bought on credit 500,000 Tumans worth of foreign goods from the port [Chabahar] to sell without paying taxes in Tehran, through smuggling. However, my truckload was seized and confiscated by the Revolutionary Guards."

Hoseyn Aqa clarified the reason for having taped a Baluchi song interspersed with the sound of gun volleys. He looked at us with an air of self-glorification and said: "We shot these bullets. Every one of them costs 30 Tumans. During a wedding gendarmes came to search us for smuggled goods. On the pretext of celebrating the wedding, we shot a series of bullets in the air. The gendarmes stopped their search and waited. In the meantime we fled."

Hoseyn Aqa was talking about gendarmes without any fear. He considered smuggling to be a normal way of making a living because of its pervasiveness in that region. What we deduced from talking to him was that he had owned a restaurant and an inn in Baluchestan. He had been forced to shut down both because of lack of travelers. We also noticed that heroin was placed inside tissue boxes.

In the port of Chabahar, the arrival of smuggled goods by sea and loading them on trucks and vans is indeed a spectacle worth watching: dealers in smuggled goods from everywhere flood Chabahar for "shopping." Smuggled items ranging from garments and electric appliances to motorcycles, television sets, etc. cover the seashore.

Under the former Shah, smuggling was not engaged into so openly and, if caught, smugglers had to bribe gendarmes to retain their cargoes.

The robbers' major center in Baluchestan is a remote and mountainous area called Ahuran. Militarily, it has major importance: because of its geographic location it can be easily defended. Ahuran is located south of Iranshahr and north of Chabahar. Another center of theft and robberies is the area of Rasak and Sarbaz: not one week passes without a report of a robbery attack or the taking of an hostage.

The director of the Rasak military base, Kalki, is a Baluchi non-commissioned officer. He enjoys much influence and prestige in the region and maintains good relations with the Baluchis. On numerous occasions he has recaptured stolen automobiles from highway robbers and returned them to their owners.

At present the Baluchi people are anxiously awaiting the government's crackdown on highway robbers and other undesirables to make the area safe.

[2 Aug 79, pp 5,11]

[Text] The progressive forces of the Baluchi masses believe that there is only one way to ensure justice and safety in Sistan-Baluchestan: purging that province of the Khans and Sardars and of the scourge of "Khanism" and "Sardarism" which recalls the feudal system of "a government within a government."

The social makeup of Sistan-Baluchestan, economically and politically, is generally based on the tribal system. However, apart from social organization and classification, there are also scattered urban forces with workers and retail tradesmen.

The Khans: Absolute Rulers

A tribal hierarchy includes:

- 1 - The Khan. This is the chief of the tribe. He owns goods and a retinue of servants. He has authority over riflemen and the religious leader.
- 2 - the "Kadkhoda" [Village Headman]. Within a tribe, the power of a Village Headman is second only to that of the Khan. Because of his wealth (livestock and real estate) the Village Headman controls the social strata within his jurisdiction.
- 3 - The "Arbab" [landlord] is third in rank within a tribe. He owns land, water supplies, farming facilities, and refers to himself as "small holder."
- 4 - The Artisan (blacksmith or carpenter).
- 5 - The Farmer, without water and property, who earns the lowest wages in exchange for most of the labor.
- 6 - Slaves and serfs working for the Khan, Village Headman, and Arbab.

Some slaves work as camel drivers or are involved in farming, and their wives toil side by side with them in feeding camels and pulling the grass. However men are not used to sending their daughters to school.

Productive work in a tribe is carried out by Farmers. In Baluchestan farming involves dates, corn, cereals, mats, and, in some areas, fish and salt. Nevertheless, profits derived from such farming go to the Khans, Village Headmen, and Arbabs.

In the Iranshahr-Chabahar area there are 6 tribes living together. The Khans dominate that area with their influence. The 6 tribes are:

1. The Mobaraki tribe
2. The Lashari tribe
3. The Shirani tribe
4. The sardarzahi tribe
5. The Sa'idi tribe

6. The Barakzahi tribe

The Sardar of the Mobaraki tribe, 'Isakhan Mobaraki, who had been a highway robber in the past, is illiterate and uninformed in political matters.

After turning himself over to the Shah's regime, he was appointed governor of Iranshahr. Later he entered the Majles as Iranshahr's bogus representative. Furthermore, 'Isa Mobaraki was an employee of the Ministry of Court and the official consultant of 'Alam, the Court Minister under the deposed Shah.

Mohammadkhan Lashari is the Sardar of the Lashari tribe. For years he had been the bogus representative of Iranshahr residents in the Shah's bogus Majles.

The area served by the Shirani tribe includes Manuj and [illegible], which are the most populous in Baluchestan. The heads of this tribe are Sardar Sa'idkhan, Sardar Hoseynkhan, Sardar Eslamkhan, and Sardar 'Alikhan (the last representative of feudal lords who surrendered to the former Shah). Bahramkhan Shirani is the chief of the Shirani tribe.

The Shirani tribe has been active in cracking down on Rasulbakhsh and 'Azam, riflemen who have been warring with them as bandits.

The chief of the Sardarzahi tribe, 'Abadikhan, had at first been a secessionist. After a tour of duty in Bagdad, he became an opponent of the Shah's regime. However, after his defeat, he surrendered and served the regime. 'Abadikhan's brother, Mirmowladkhan Sardarzahi, has, for some time, been trafficking in smuggling weapons and guards.

Hajkarimbakhsh Sa'idi is the chief of the Sa'idi tribe. Earlier he had been the political advisor of Court Minister 'Alam on Baluchi and Pakistani matters, and held a hostile attitude towards the Baluchis and the Pakistanis. As a reward for his services he had represented Chabahar at 3 Majles sessions.

The son of Dustmohammadkhan (the famous Sardar under Reza Shah) is the chief of the Barakzahi tribe. He was appointed representative of the Saravan County in the Majles. According to a local publication, JAMBARAN, Iranshahr's gendarmerie regiment has made available some weapons to him and Mohammad Mirlashari.

All the Khans of Sistan-Baluchestan have banded together in a coalition aimed against the Baluchi people. Furthermore, in other counties of that province, large tribes wield influence and enjoy prestige.

In Khash, the chief of the Rigi tribe is Sardar Haddadkhan Rigi and Taqikhan Rigi is among its Sardars.

In Sarbaz and Chabahr, the Sardarzhahis, and in Saravan, the Barakzhahis, led by Amanollah Baran, are influential.

In Zahedan the children of 'Abdukhan carry more weight.

In Zabol, the Shirkhanzhahis and the Naru'is wield most of the power. Apart from them, in other sections of Baluchestan, there are smaller tribes influenced and dominated by larger tribes. Nevertheless the small tribes carry much weight with local residents: Mehrollahkhan, the Sardar of the large village of Junabad has recently been able to put an end to the war between 2 of Khsh' small tribes, the Shahnavazi and the Berahu'i, and to restore peace. In the course of the armed conflict between these 2 tribes, which erupted as a result of an accident between a motorcyclist and a pedestrian (each belonging to a different tribe) 2 persons were killed and some were wounded.

Because the Khans have had scuffles with the past regime and also because they regarded themselves as people's representatives, they would always receive various funds for dredging of underground canals and other development projects from the government, funds which they would embezzle. Furthermore, they were always the main members of village councils, that is, the very role that ought to have been assumed by the villagers.

Dadrahman Amiri, small holder and a henchman of the Mobaraki Khans, who introduced himself as overseer of the voting program for the referendum of the Islamic Republic opined as follows on the Islamic government and the regions' general conditions:

"...you are thinking that the Palestinian people is weak or that the Baluchi people is weak because it has neither electricity nor petroleum! It's been some time now that petroleum is not being delivered to the people any more. As we Baluchis say: 'What's God's property should belong to God's creatures!' The Moslem government must establish a just society.

In Espakeh I worked with the commander of the base in charge of the ballot box for the referendum of the Islamic Republic. During 2 days of voting nobody voted. But because we were all fanatical Moslems, we dropped 2,000 votes in the ballot box! You can never imagine the insults we got from the people for this service. Even now they keep saying: 'You see, we told you.'"

In this same connection, Karim Mirlashari, another Khan of the Iranshahr-Chabahar area stated:

"At present 1/4th of our people have migrated to Arab and other neighboring countries to find jobs and make a living. And yet, if facilities are made available, we can have our own agriculture. Thousands of hectares of arable land have been left unused.

If the government does not pay attention to our lot, we will be compelled to accept assistance from the British and Americans who have been contacting us. But we are patriotic and have been rejecting their offers. The Baluchis have suffered for years. Why then should a military man like Colonel Kazeruni who is alien to us, become the regiment commander for this region?

We have heard that some want to disarm us. We have several thousand armed people. If the government wishes to see calm prevail in the region, it must charge us with the control of the situation, grant us the right to autonomy, and take non-Baluchi Islamic Guards out of Sistan-Baluchestan: they understand neither our people's language, nor the situation in this region."

We asked him: "Where did you get your weapons?"

Mirlashari replied: "We've had old weapons for some time now. And we are buying new ones. We buy the UZ's, ZH-3's, Berneaux, and each bullet respectively at 15,000, 18,000, 20,000, and 30 Tumans. We have been doing our utmost and buying arms to fight against lawlessness and unsafe conditions. We will oppose any force trying to disarm us!"

Intrigues to Sow Discords

Up until the recent Iranian Revolution, all Iranian peoples, including the Sistanis-Baluchis, had banded together against imperialism and there had been no obvious dissidence in political and religious matters. However, after the victory of the Revolution, a cleavage emerged within our masses.

The 2 revolutionary forces consisted of Shiite Sistanis-Baluchis and young leftist Sunnis. Both groups had been most active in exposing the abuses of the deposed Shah's regime. The Shiites are concentrated mostly in Zahedan, Zabol, and Bazman, but are also found in other towns of Sistan-Baluchestan.

Since the toppling of the Shah, SAVAK agents and some Khans have engaged in provocations to sow discord between Shiite and Sunnite Baluchis. Just a few

days after the victory of the Revolution, a group of henchmen of the Khans, brought on several trucks and tractors to Iranshahr, set about breaking windows and ransacking stores owned by Shiites. That group of assailants is not representative of Baluchi Sunnis: Baluchi Shiite and Sunni brethren have lived side by side, associated and transacted with one another on the market for years without any conflict or discord.

A similar incident occurred in Saravan on a smaller scale: a few mercenaries attacked the places of business of Saravan's Shiites and forced many of them to flee the town.

-Such repeated incidents reflect the distress of antirevolutionary agents about the awakening of the oppressed Iranian peoples, irrespective of their religion or opinion.

On the threshold of the victory of the Revolution in Zahedan, similar mercenaries attacked revolutionary demonstrators with sticks and clubs and severely injured them.

Likewise, in Zabol, agents of the previous regime, who are still busy sowing discords in Baluchestan, managed to gather a group of uninformed peasants and incited them to ransack properties owned by Shiite residents. Once again the plotters were aiming at sowing dissensions among the Shiites and Sunnis.

The Moslems of Sistan-Baluchestan, both Shiites and Sunnis, have time and time again banded together to organize political marches and meetings. Furthermore, they have asked the government to scrap any reference to a specific religion in the Draft Constitution in order to avoid discrimination against either the Shiites or the Sunnis. and forestall premeditated scuffles such as those in Naqdeh, Sanandaj, Gonbad, Khorramshahr, Marivan, etc. According to a Sunni resident of Saravan: "SAVAK was inciting us to drive away the Shiites from this town. But I did not let myself be provoked. I said to myself: they are Moslems like me." Residents of Rasak are among those who have protested twice so far against the command post in this area and have demanded the voiding of Article 13 in the Draft Constitution, Similar demands have been made in other sections of this province.

Why Haven't the Baluchis Been Fully Attracted to the Revolution?

The Baluchis have had no chance to give it a sound thought because, since the Shah's regime has been toppled, the rampant unemployment in Sistan-Baluchestan has forced them to practice smuggling, thereby exacerbating living conditions already made unbearable by the oppressive domination of the Khans and the Baluchi tribal system.

It is most unfair to accuse the Baluchis of being pro-Shah: people like Kambuzia, who used to be tortured by the Shah's agents now hold public

offices; the Shah's army used to throw live people to their deaths from atop fortresses in Bampur, Iranshahr, Sarbaz, Davarpanah, Kuhak, and the Baluchis remember all that with bitterness and have staged numerous anti-imperialistic marches.

The Russians Are Coming!

In many Baluchi stores one can see the picture of Afghan Sunnis' leader who is battling against Taraki. This reflects Iranian Baluchis' strong friendship for Afghan Baluchis.

From what a few Baluchis were saying after returning from Afghanistan it was apparent that Afghan peasants who have become landowners by Taraki sympathize with him, but do not dare supporting him'. Groups of Afghans are seeking refuge in Iran and Pakistan because of drought conditions and political unrest in Afghanistan.

A Baluchi claimed having robbed a Russian army car and using it in Baluchestan. Some others were talking about stealing weapons in Afghanistan. And, in general, because of the Russian role in Afghanistan and false propaganda by the Shah's regime to the effect that if the Shah goes, the Russians will come to Baluchestan, the Baluchis tend to regard all foreigners as Russians. Upon seeing some foreigners, the Baluchi children exclaim: "The Russians are coming!"

From our talk with several Pakistanis, we gathered that armed clashes were still going on between the people and the army in Pakistani Baluchestan. Some Moslem Pakistanis are helping the anti-Taraki forces. At the invitation of Pakistan's MARDOM party, led by Butto's wife, many Pakistani Baluchis fought and died in a domestic war.

Apart from insecurity along roads due to the proliferation of highway robbers, the Baluchis also complain about insecurity in terms of natural disasters, such as earthquakes in Kashikur, Sarbaz, Rasak; the Talagardun volcano in the Jabal Mountain Range, and floods around Iranshahr.

Kashikur, Sarbaz, and Rasak residents hang their brass and copper utensils and, when these become "noisy," the residents are alerted to the emergence of an earthquake!

The winds which blow for 4 months in Sistan at a speed of 70 kilometers an hour are among other scourges of the residents. The average rainfall in this province averages 47 centimeters, which is a pittance.

At present, although nearly 6 months have gone by since the victory of the Revolution, problems and inequities have ballooned in Sistan-Baluchestan. The local "Komiteh" in several parts of this province (especially in Zahedan and Zabol), consisting of non-Baluchis, are incapable of solving the problems of this province: it is imperative that local residents assume that task. Residents of this province have brought this issue to the attention of the governor. On 15 Tir [6 July], at the Rasuli intersection in Zahedan an armed scuffle broke out between 2 groups of Zahedan residents. Members of the Komiteh were compelled to intervene and put an end to it. However people were frightened and angrily attacked the Komiteh members. Because people had not cooperated with the Guards, the scuffle ended up with the wounding of a number of Guards.

In addition to the need for organizing local guards, the government has a major role to play with respect to the economic backwardness of the Sistani-Baluchi people. The establishment of cooperatives selling major food staples such as flour, oil, rice at low prices to the people is absolutely essential. A model of such cooperatives was set up in Khash and proved to be a huge success.

The government is also obligated to void the indebtedness of farmers vis-a-vis banks. Likewise, helping people to develop handicrafts such as pottery, embroidery, needlepoint, etc. can go a long way toward reducing the squandering of people's energies.

Sistan-Baluchestan is a land with abundant mineral deposits (petroleum, gas, copper, coal, etc.)

Future government projects in this province must aim at eliminating some of the most glaring problems and inequities. Foremost among projects must be the creation of employment centers and the resumption of centers of employment which have closed down.

This year's budget for Sistan-Baluchestan amounts 20 million Tumans. According to the Governor General of Sistan-Baluchestan, that amount matches last year's budget. Such a budget does not meet the needs of the province.

Madani, Commander of the Navy and Governor General of Khuzestan has promised that the Chabahar base will be turned into southern fisheries. Such a conversion might have a great impact in terms of providing employment. The establishment of canned food plants in Zabol and Chobahar, which are on the agenda of the Governor General might also prove most beneficial.

Likewise the opening of an agricultural college in Zahk, Sistan, which have been promised by the government, will prove beneficial.

However, the allocation of 160 apartments in Zahedan to a group of government employees does not solve the housing problem in that area.

Future government projects in Sistan-Baluchestan include:
the asphaltting of the Shuregaz-Mirjaveh Road (360-kilometers long),
the asphaltting of the Bam-Zahedi, Khash-Saravan, and Zahedan-Zabol Roads,
for which groundwork had been laid under the Shah's regime. The implementation
of these projects will have a constructive effect for development. But let us
remember: to forestall the explosion of the Sistani-Baluchi "bomb" it is
imperative that the most fundamental problems are solved expeditiously.

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